SUMMER HIKING GUIDE 2012

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

EXPLORE · EXPERIENCE

JUNE 2012

what to pack in your backpack

EDITOR'S PICKS

10 OF THE BEST TRAILS FOR SUMMER

PLUS: RODEO-CHEDISKI: 10 YEARS LATER · ALLIGATOR JERKY · RED MOUNTAIN PAYSON · TUZIGOOT NATIONAL MONUMENT · SEDONA · OAK CREEK · GOAT PEOPLE

"Jumping from boulder to boulder and never falling is easier than it sounds: You just can't fall when you get into the rhythm of the dance." — JACK KEROUAC

CONTENTS 06.12

● POINTS OF INTEREST IN THIS ISSUE

GET MORE ONLINE
www.arizonahighways.com

Visit our website for details on weekend getaways, hiking, lodging, dining, photography workshops, slideshows and more.

www.arizonahighways.wordpress.com
Check out our blog for daily posts on just about anything having to do with travel in Arizona, including Q&As with writers and photographers, special events, bonus photos, sneak peeks at upcoming issues and more.

www.facebook.com/azhighways
Join our Facebook community to share your photographs, chat with other fans, enter trivia contests and receive up-to-the-minute information about what's going on behind the scenes at *Arizona Highways*.

Arizona Highways is on Instagram
Follow us @arizonahighways to see our travel photos from around the state.

Photographic Prints Available
Prints of some photographs in this issue are available for purchase. To view options, visit www.arizonahighwaysprints.com. For more information, call 866-962-1191.

A small plume of grass thrives in the flowing water of Oak Creek, near Sedona. | KIM HOSHAL

FRONT COVER Stacey Barnes of Scottsdale crosses Oak Creek, along the West Fork Oak Creek Trail in Sedona. | PAUL MARKOW

BACK COVER A monarch butterfly clings to an agave leaf at Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix. | BRUCE D. TAUBERT

No.1 Is on the North Rim

Have you heard the one about the big cat and the hikers? It goes like this: Two guys are out hiking on Picketpost Mountain, scrambling up the jagged slope, when suddenly a mountain lion rushes out from behind a boulder. Immediately, the first guy rips off his hiking boots and throws on some running shoes. The second guy says, "What are you doing? Do you have any idea how fast a mountain lion can move? You'll never be able to outrun it." To which the first guy responds, "I don't have to outrun the mountain lion; I just have to outrun you."

I get a lot of G-rated jokes from my nieces. I added the part about Picketpost Mountain, which is the kind of place you might see a mountain lion. It's rugged country. Still, the trail to the top of that mountain is one of my favorites. But not in June. It's too hot. This time of year, you'll want to do your hiking in the high country. The North Rim, the Mogollon Rim, the Catalinas ... take your pick. There are great hikes in every direction. The best, however, is on the North Rim.

It's only my opinion, but I think the Widforss Trail is the best hike in Arizona. Most people go with Humphreys, which is spectacular, but I have it at No. 4. Part of that is the crowds — everybody wants to climb Humphreys. Widforss is different. It's quiet, which makes everything else so much more enjoyable. Things like cool breezes, Engelmann spruce, quaking aspens, Kaibab squirrels, mule deer and incredible views of the Grand Canyon.

That's the other difference. The Canyon. If it weren't for that, the West Baldy Trail might have been No. 1. And if it hadn't been for the Wallow Fire, the Bear Wallow Trail might have topped the list. Instead, it's not even in this month's cover story. Neither is Escudilla, Aker Lake or any of the other beautiful hikes that were scorched by the largest wildfire in state history.

Although most of the trails in the White Mountains have been reopened since the fire, they haven't been cleaned up, and, frankly, they're not the same. "Megafires" have a way of doing that. Although wildfires are to be expected in a place as arid as Arizona, megafires like Wallow are not. And we probably haven't seen the last of them — in fact, it's possible we'll be in the midst of another one by the time this magazine hits newsstands.


KRISTIN HAYWARD, KBH PHOTOGRAPHY

In *A Burning Issue*, an excellent, in-depth piece by Kelly Kramer, we take a look at big fires and mark the 1-year anniversary of the Wallow Fire and the 10-year anniversary of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire — two fires that collectively burned more than a million acres. The objective of the story was to find out whether anything had changed in terms of fire management in the time between the two fires. Did our forest managers learn anything? Change anything? Fix anything? The short answer is no, but it's a complicated problem. One that could take generations to be corrected. Meantime, as Chuck Bowden writes in a powerful essay titled *The Fires of My Life*, "We have only one possible choice: to embrace the future."

The other thing we can do is heed the words of Smokey and use some common sense when it comes to campfires and cigarette butts. Of course, you shouldn't be smoking in the woods, anyway. It attracts mountain lions, and you'll never outrun a mountain lion.

IN MEMORIAM
PAUL BOND

ON FEBRUARY 9, 2012, *Arizona Highways* lost a good friend and the state of Arizona lost one of its most treasured icons. Indeed, Paul Bond was an icon — there's no hyperbole in that statement. In the world of bootmakers, Mr. Bond was second to none. That's why guys like John Wayne, Johnny Cash, Clint Eastwood, Paul Newman, Frank Sinatra and Steve McQueen made their way to Nogales when they wanted a real pair of cowboy boots. I had the same urge a couple of years ago, and made the trek south. The thing is, I'd never owned any boots before, and didn't know the first thing about ordering a pair. So, I deferred to the soft-spoken master, who chose the leather, the heel, the toe, the color and the design of my boots. He used one of his own personal designs, and then he humbly signed my boots with a black, medium-point Sharpie. Those boots are a treasure I intend to keep for the rest of my life. Where they go from there will be spelled out in my will. But as much as I love my boots, I'm even more grateful for having had the opportunity to meet Mr. Bond, to sit with him and to listen to his stories. And there were a lot of stories. He was 96 when he died, and I suspect he was telling stories until the very end. I can say without hesitation that I've never met a nicer or more gracious man. Our condolences go out to his family and friends, and to all of the cowboys and cowgirls who have been lucky enough to own a pair of Paul Bond Boots.


JOEL GRIMES

ROBERT STIEVE, *editor*
Follow me on Twitter: @azhighways

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS
JUNE 2012 VOL. 88, NO. 6
800-543-5432 www.arizonahighways.com

PUBLISHER Win Holden
EDITOR Robert Stieve
SENIOR EDITOR Randy Summerlin
MANAGING EDITOR Kelly Kramer
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Kathy Ritchie
EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATOR Nikki Kimbel
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR Jeff Kida
CREATIVE DIRECTOR Barbara Glynn Denney
ART DIRECTOR Keith Whitney
DESIGN PRODUCTION ASSISTANT Diana Benzel-Rice
MAP DESIGNER Kevin Kibsey
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Michael Bianchi
WEBMASTER Victoria J. Snow
DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING Kelly Mero
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Nicole Bowman
FINANCE DIRECTOR Bob Allen
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY Cindy Bormanis

CORPORATE OR TRADE SALES 602-712-2019
SPONSORSHIP SALES REPRESENTATION Ernie Mulholland, emm media services llc, 602-971-6260, erniemm13@gmail.com
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR editor@arizonahighways.com, 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009

Arizona Highways® (ISSN 0004-1521) is published monthly by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Subscription price: $24 a year in the U.S., $44 outside the U.S. Single copy: $3.99 U.S. Call 800-543-5432. Subscription correspondence and change of address information: *Arizona Highways*, P.O. Box 8521, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8521. Periodical postage paid at Phoenix, AZ, and at additional mailing office. CANADA POST INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS MAIL PRODUCT (CANADIAN DISTRIBUTION) SALES AGREEMENT NO. 41220511. SEND RETURNS TO QUAD/GRAPHICS, P.O. BOX 875, WINDSOR, ON N9A 6P2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Arizona Highways*, P.O. Box 8521, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8521.

PRODUCED IN THE USA

CHARLES BOWDEN
Charles Bowden began writing as a boy, but he says it wasn't until his 30s that he realized it was suitable as a career. "I write about life, and sometimes life is a desert or a mountain or a falcon on the wing," Bowden says. This month, he writes about wildfires (*The Fires of My Life*, page 48). "The fires now sweeping the Southwest are destroying the world I have known and creating a world I must learn," he says. "It is too late to stop them, but too soon to fear the future. They abideth forever, but we must decide if we are worth our salt and will continue in this beautiful and hard ground." Bowden is a regular contributor to *Arizona Highways*. His work has also appeared in *GQ*, *Esquire* and *National Geographic*.

STACEY BARNES
Arizona Highways doesn't always have people on its cover, but for this month's *Summer Hiking Guide* (page 18), model Stacey Barnes visited Sedona with her husband (pictured) and photographer Paul Markow for a trek through Oak Creek Canyon. "In my off-time, hiking is my favorite activity," Barnes says. "And with Arizona's beautiful, diverse landscape, you can hike in some amazing places. From the Sonoran Desert to the deep red rocks of Sedona and the dense, rich, green forests in Greer and Flagstaff, we have it all."


PAUL MARKOW

JACK DYKINGA
Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Jack Dykinga was met with a challenge when he went to photograph the aftermath of the Wallow Fire: finding beauty amid a scene of destruction. Despite what he describes as a "stunningly huge" spread of damage, he found ways to make the scene visually interesting (see *A Burning Issue*, page 40). "You go in with all this death and then start seeing this life coming back in," he says. "It's hard to take, but you have to sort of change your mindset and realize that fire is part of the process." In addition to *Arizona Highways*, Dykinga's work has also appeared in *National Geographic* and *Time*.

— MOLLY J. SMITH

BEAR MAXIMUM

I recently hiked up Bear Mountain, which is located just outside of Sedona, with a copy of your *Best Restaurants* edition [April 2012]. I enjoy your articles and your photography of Arizona, and recently subscribed to the digital edition so that I can view the magazine on my iPad. You should do an article on Bear Mountain. It's a short (5 miles round-trip) and strenuous (1,800 feet in elevation gain) hike, but has some rewarding views of Mount Wilson to the east, the San Francisco Peaks to the north and Jerome to the west.

Marilyn Sanders, Sedona, Arizona

April 2012

PALM READER

I enjoyed the article *Rugged Good Looks* by Craig Childs [April 2012], but have one question. On page 42, the photo caption reads, "The only native palm trees in Arizona are located in Palm Canyon." It's my understanding that native palms also grow in the Castle Hot Springs area, which is located west of Lake Pleasant along Castle Creek. There might also be some native palms along the Hassayampa River south of Wickenburg, but experts believe those were planted by settlers, because the trees' pollen cannot be found in the ancient mud. Those of us who have visited the Castle Hot Springs property are saddened that this outstanding historic and natural area is not protected. Perhaps an article about it in *Arizona Highways* would spark some interest in protecting it.

Martha Maxon, Wickenburg, Arizona

ABOUT WHAT ED SAID ...

I just read the March 2012 issue. Loved it, as usual. I was amused by the letter from Ed Campbell of Chandler. Since when is artistry in photography a bad thing? If there were no artistry in the photos you print, we'd be subjected to photos taken by any hack with a camera, maybe even Ed. Thank you for the December 2011 issue, with all its artistry. It's what every photographer worth his or her salt strives for. I wish I could spend more time in Arizona photographing the great scenery. Maybe one of these days. Until then, I'll continue to enjoy your magazine and all the artistic photography you can cram into it. I did, however, like Ed's idea about a magazine about nothing but that artsy stuff. Maybe you could call it, "Arizona for Everybody But Ed." Just a thought.

Tom Porter, Albany, Oregon

HIGH-CLEARANCE LOWDOWN

In the *Scenic Drive* section of *Arizona Highways* you frequently use the phrase, "A high-clearance vehicle is required." Can you quantify "high-clearance" for me? How much (in inches) is that? Or, are you generically referring to pickup trucks or some other class of vehicles?

Ted Popowchak, Scottsdale, Arizona

EDITOR'S NOTE: Good question, Ted, we get it a lot. When we refer to a high-clearance vehicle, we're referring to a full-size pickup or a full-size SUV (Honda Pilot, Toyota 4Runner, Ford Explorer, et al.). Army tanks would work, too, but we discourage their use because they're hard on the environment and they get lousy gas mileage.

STILL THE ONE

I started my first magazine subscription when I was about 9 years old (51 years ago), and it was *Arizona Highways*. Even back then, I was really impressed with the photography. Josef Muench has been a "guiding light" to me, and your magazine has had so many great photos by others, as well. Even today, your magazine is the only one I subscribe to. Since 1960, I have been through Arizona one time, and I love the area. Please keep up the good work. Even though I can't afford to travel, your magazine helps me get to the places my heart wants to be.

Randy Muir, Nashville, Tennessee

EXCELLENT MEMORIES

I've been a subscriber to and have loved *Arizona Highways* for 62 years, and have wanted to congratulate you and your staff for each and every issue; however, after receiving this month's Centennial issue [February 2012], I must write and tell you how it touched my heart and brought back happy memories! Before graduating from West Phoenix High School in 1953 and going on to ASU, I modeled for the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce Tourism Department doing many "shoots" in Paradise Valley (page 49) with not a person or structure in sight. I was at the grand opening in 1953 of the second McDonald's on Central Avenue and Indian School Road (page 58). And as a dancer with the Gene Bumph Dance Studio, I did shows at The Biltmore Hotel (pages 17 and 35) and many other surrounding resorts and fine-dining venues. Thank you for your superb publication, and for this month in particular, which provided me with many happy memories of our beautiful Arizona!

Patti Morton, Rialto, California AH

contact us If you have thoughts or comments about anything in *Arizona Highways*, we'd love to hear from you. We can be reached at editor@arizonahighways.com, or by mail at 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009. For more information, visit www.arizonahighways.com.

THE JOURNAL 06.12

people > local favorites > odd jobs > lodging > photography > history > hometowns > dining > nature > things to do

JAY DUSARD

Rocks and a Hard Place

In 1971, photographer Jay Dusard used his brand-new Kodak Master 8x10 camera to capture *Lichen and Granite* near Prescott's Granite Dells. Despite the simple lines and shapes, making the image proved challenging for Dusard. "With the long lens, my head barely fit between the ground-glass and the tree behind me." But, he adds, it was "eminently worth the struggle." *Information: Prescott Office of Tourism, 928-777-1100 or www.visit-prescott.com*

THE POLE POSITION

A lot of people hike with hiking poles. Mike Armstrong can't hike without them. Having lost his sight at age 27, that's the only way he can hit the trail. But don't feel sorry for him; his disability has empowered him to tackle feats most sighted athletes only talk about — like hiking the 800-mile Arizona Trail.

A slightly hunched Mike Armstrong cautiously plants his right foot on the rocky trail that leads to the summit of Piestewa Peak (right). With his foot set and secure, he carefully steps down with the other foot, using his two trekking poles to gauge the mountainous terrain. Directly ahead of Armstrong is another hiker with a bear bell attached to his backpack. The bell rings and, at the same time, the man guides Armstrong in the right direction: "Step left, big step, steep drop on the right."

To unsuspecting hikers, Armstrong is just another climber with trekking poles — and bad posture — and the man in front of him, obviously terrified of bears, is a guy who likes to talk to himself.

Finally, someone says something: "Why are you wearing a bell? There are no bears around here."

Both men stop. "Dude, I'm blind," Armstrong says matter-of-factly. "The bell tells me which way to go."

First comes the profuse apology, then the praise: "Oh, man, you're an inspiration."

At 42, Armstrong has overcome tragedy and adversity, and his disability has empowered him to tackle feats most sighted athletes only talk about — like hiking the 800-mile Arizona Trail.

But that's another story.

Born legally blind, Armstrong wore corrective lenses to compensate for his poor vision, the result of nondiabetic retinopathy, a disease that damages the blood vessels in the retina. By age 22, he was blind in his right eye. Four years later, Armstrong's doctor found a tear in his left eye and told him that surgery was his only option.

The night before the operation, Armstrong, sensing something might go wrong, watched his last sunset. "It was surreal," he says. "Seeing the majesty of the different colors — orange, red, gold, purple — fading into the black. It was amazing."

PAUL MARKOW

Despite a 90-percent surgical success rate, Armstrong's gut was right. "I woke up and the doctor was suturing my eye," he explains. "The painkiller was starting to come off and he said, 'Sorry, Mike.' I thought he was saying sorry about suturing my eye."

His retina was destroyed beyond repair. It was a fork-in-the-road moment for the 27-year-old.

"I registered in vocational rehab and started figuring out how to be a blind guy." Turns out, figuring out how to be a blind guy meant relearning everything — even putting toothpaste on a toothbrush was a lesson in living. "Every time I picked up another skill, I felt like I got more of my freedom back."

Freedom also meant getting a job. Almost five years after losing his sight, he opened a karate dojo in Phoenix (he holds multiple black belts). Business was good. Life was good. And then his partner quit, leaving Armstrong to figure out the business side on his own. Knowing that he needed to refresh his computer skills, he enrolled in vocational rehab at the Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) in Phoenix. The move was serendipitous. "After one of my workshops, I was talking to the director of adult services and she said, 'Did you hear about the Mount Kilimanjaro climb?' I said, 'No.' She looked at me and said, 'Do you want to climb the biggest mountain in Africa?'" Armstrong was in. "I just had to clear it with my wife," he laughs.

> "Dude, I'm blind," Armstrong says matter-of-factly. "The bell tells me which way to go."

Armstrong and a team of seven other blind hikers reached Kilimanjaro's summit on June 29, 2009, setting a world record. Inspired, he went on to compete in a two-day adventure race in Colorado. And by 2010, Armstrong, wanting to raise money for FBC, decided to hike the Arizona Trail. "It sounded like an amazing accomplishment, walking 800 miles through the state," he says. Armstrong spent the rest of the year preparing for what would be a physically and mentally grueling hike.

On April 2, 2011, Armstrong, along with his sighted guide, set off from the Arizona side of the U.S.-Mexico border. For the first three days, he was determined to hike with a full pack — or about 40 pounds of gear. But after reaching Patagonia, he reduced his load to around 25 to 30 pounds. A car carrying the rest of their equipment was never far behind. Still, days were punishing. Armstrong would start hiking as early as 5 a.m. and make camp around midnight. "When I thought about how many miles I had to go, it would defeat my ambition," he says. When Armstrong started focusing on *just* the day at hand, it made his trek less arduous. "I learned a lot about myself on that trip — I had so much time to think. Nonetheless, there were many days where I was seriously frustrated because I'd fall so many times," he says.

Coming down the Rincon Mountains, Armstrong fell 20 times. "I was ready to quit," he confesses. Bruised and bloodied, but uninjured, he pushed on — until he reached Mount Peeley in the Mazatzal Mountains. Days earlier, Armstrong hyperextended his ankle and took some serious cactus in his leg, which caused soft-tissue damage. In severe pain, he was forced to leave the trail. "I couldn't do anything but lie in bed and force myself to heal."

Nine days later, he was back at it, but the delay caused another problem: His guides had to return to work. Fortunately, friends, family and FBC members stepped up to guide Armstrong to the finish line. "The last day was amazing," he says. "We came through this little valley with a view of the Vermilion Cliffs, and my guides stopped because it was so impressive. I could feel the energy of the area. I was choking up the last 3 miles. I can't believe I hiked across Arizona."

— KATHY RITCHIE

For more information about Mike Armstrong, visit www.blindmotivation.com. To make a donation to the Foundation for Blind Children, call 602-331-1470 or visit www.seeitourway.org.

local favorites

DAWN KISH

DANIEL'S REALLY GOOD FRESH JERKY

Quartzsite and Parker

The secret to really good jerky is freshness — at least according to Daniel Hernandez of Daniel's Really Good Fresh Jerky. The Argentinian transplant to the Arizona desert uses traditional recipes to produce his famed alligator jerky, ahi jerky, elk jerky and more.

How'd you end up in Western Arizona?
It's a long history. My uncle moved to the United States soon after I was born, and he was in the meat business. I moved here in the 1990s, and before my uncle retired and went back to Argentina, he gave me his recipes.

What's so special about your jerky?
It's the flavor. I make it a little more Argentine-style. And the people like it because it's fresh. Usually, when you go to the supermarket, they import most of the jerky from Argentina and Brazil. They process the meat, and by the time the customer gets it, it isn't as fresh. My jerky is never older than two weeks. We make only what we need; we don't make extra.

What kinds of jerky do you sell?
We make beef, turkey, pork, buffalo, venison, ahi tuna and alligator. We also sell chocolate, fudge, honey, candy and a thousand different kinds of hot sauce. We sell enough kinds for people to have whatever they want: tequila mango, pineapple, Trinidad scorpion ... all the flavors you can imagine.

— MOLLY J. SMITH

Daniel's Really Good Jerky is located at 1124 S. California Avenue in Parker and 1240 S. Main Street in Quartzsite. For more information, call 928-669-0026 or visit www.reallygoodfreshjerky.com.

DAWN KISH

GOAT FARMER

John Bittner, Strawberry

Ask John Bittner why he got himself some goats and he'll tell you it was for the fudge. "I always wanted to make goat's-milk fudge," he confesses. "Who the heck ever heard of goat's-milk fudge?" Besides being a fudge aficionado, Bittner also has a soft spot for these "very loving animals." He's owned goats, on and off, for the past 45 years. But after he and his wife, Joyce, purchased llamas, they left Scottsdale and headed north for some breathing room. The Ranch at Fossil Creek, near Strawberry, is home to the Bittners' small herd of goats (plus the llamas). It's also a destination for folks wanting to reconnect with Mother Nature. Or, in the case of the 12-and-under set, to bottle-feed the babies. In addition to fudge — Bittner swears it's delicious — he and his wife also make cheese (including cheddar and havarti), soap, lotion, ice cream and cheesecake. Clearly, Bittner isn't joking when he says, "There's no such thing as having too much goat's milk."

— KATHY RITCHIE

The Ranch at Fossil Creek is located at 10379 W. Fossil Creek Road in Strawberry. For more information, call 928-476-5178 or visit www.ranchatfossilcreek.com.

DAWN KISH

Out in the Woods

Surrounded by Coconino National Forest and its vast expanse of ponderosa pines, the Abineau Lodge in Flagstaff is a great place for hikers, bikers or anybody who might like to sit on a deck and watch a herd of elk graze at sunset.

Some people jump out of airplanes. Others buy sports cars. But the day Wendy White realized she was far disconnected from the rock-climbing, adventure-seeking woman of her younger years, she built a lodge in the woods.

flagstaff

When she and her husband, Jaime Ballesteros, constructed what was originally the Sled Dog Inn just south of Flagstaff in 1997, they envisioned an outdoor-recreation haven. They led tours right from the lodge and gave guests the chance to take their team of 18 sled dogs out on snowy adventures. It gave Wendy the outlet she so desperately needed to escape from the divorce papers that piled up at her law practice.

Fifteen years later, things are a little different, but the roots that Wendy and Jaime planted still permeate this country inn. It's now known as the Abineau Lodge, inspired by one of the San Francisco Peaks' most stunning trails. The four remaining sled dogs live comfortably in a luxurious kennel, eagerly accepting biscuits from guests. But, if you're looking for a home base for some serious outdoor adventure, this is still your spot.

With themes like Forest Hideaway and Ranch Romance, each of the lodge's nine rooms is designed to make guests feel at one with their mountain surroundings. Rustic reclaimed wood can be found throughout the property, even in several bedroom pieces handcrafted by Wendy and Jaime.

Endless miles of Coconino National Forest surround the Abineau Lodge, which might otherwise seem daunting without Wendy's hand-drawn map of the hiking and biking trails in the area. She prides herself on giving guests the inside scoop on the roads less traveled and the trails less explored in Northern Arizona.

Because it was originally built as an outdoor-adventure center, the spacious common areas beckon guests to socialize after an active day. Stock up at the in-house My Little Wine Shop and create the perfect happy hour by the fireplace, or set up camp on the deck for sunset and elk viewing.

Breakfast is included, and it's not to be missed. Wendy's love of the outdoors is rivaled only by her culinary passion. If your visit doesn't coincide with one of the glorious mornings that vanilla yogurt pancakes are served, consider extending your stay.

Wendy didn't need any death-defying stunts to reconnect with her former self. She just built a lodge in the woods and invited everyone to come explore their adventurous spirits with her.

— JACKI MIELER

Abineau Lodge is located at 1080 Mountainaire Road in Flagstaff. For more information, call 888-715-6386 or visit www.abineaulodge.com.

PAUL MARKOW

For more lodging in Arizona, visit www.arizonahighways.com/travel/lodging.asp.

MARK LIPCZYNSKI

Toying With Pictorialism

Mark Lipczynski likes toy cameras. He owns two, a Holga and a Diana, which are crudely manufactured film cameras made with imprecise plastic lenses. Under the best conditions, they produce poorly exposed, soft-focus images that have a natural vignette surrounding the edges of the negative. Interestingly, this mimics, somewhat, the late-19th century photography style called "pictorialism," whose practitioners believed the aesthetics and emotional impact of an image were more important than the subject in front of the lens. To this end, they mechanically manipulated images in order to distinguish their work from hobbyist snapshots of the day. Today, Lipczynski uses a Canon 5D Mark II, a highly sophisticated, well-engineered piece of photo equipment, when he shoots for *Arizona Highways*. And because he likes the pictorialist look so much, he's created a set of actions or commands that he's saved in Adobe Lightroom. A cousin to Photoshop, this software is today's digital darkroom and allows creative photographers an amazing amount of latitude when expressing their vision, as Mark did with this image. He doesn't set out to make every photograph look retro. Instead, he takes on every photo assignment individually and allows his experience and intuition to determine the best way to tell a story. He also knows there's a toy camera with him at all times.

— JEFF KIDA, photo editor

PHOTO TIP

New Heights

Perspective changes everything. Whether you're climbing up a boulder or crouching in the dirt, it's important to consider angles that aren't just at eye level. While some photographers are naturally tall, others might need some help in the height department. Look around for a structure to climb on, or if you're feeling ambitious, take a stepladder with you. And don't be afraid to get a little dirt on your knees. Sometimes, the most interesting images are found when you get closer to the ground.

Enter our monthly caption contest by scanning this QR code or visiting http://bit.ly/ahmcaptioncontest.

ADDITIONAL READING

Look for our book *Arizona Highways Photography Guide*, available at bookstores and www.arizonahighways.com/books.

To learn more about photography, visit www.arizonahighways.com/photography.asp.

Browsing the Webb

Sun City, the well-known retirement community on the west side of metropolitan Phoenix, put Del Webb on the map and launched his career as one of the largest land developers in the world. It was quite a feat for a guy who started out as a carpenter at the Westward Ho.

Del Webb, like so many of the people who move into his communities, was not an Arizona native.

An avid baseball player, Webb — who grew up in California and would later own the New York Yankees — had a promising career until he fell ill with typhoid fever. He moved to the Phoenix metropolitan area in 1928 for the dry climate, and began working as a carpenter.

According to Judy Bearg, a librarian at the Sun City Museum, Webb got his start hanging doors at the Westward Ho Hotel in downtown Phoenix. He later went on to found his own construction company, and is known for many projects throughout the state, including an addition to the Arizona State Capitol, the barracks at Fort Huachuca and St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix.

However, Webb's best-known legacy is Sun City, a retirement community northwest of Phoenix.

"When Sun City was built in the late 1950s, the concept of people leaving where they'd lived all of their working lives was a new one," Bearg says. "A lot of people didn't think a retirement community would work." But it did. In fact, it worked so well that opening day saw more than 100,000 people visit the community, all in search of new homes.

COURTESY DEL WEBB

Today, more than 37,000 people call Sun City home — whether year-round or just for the winter — and it features more than 100 chartered clubs, with interests ranging from woodworking to needlepoint to automobiles. Many of the houses are the original models from the 1950s, though the most recent homes were built in 1978.

From the air, Sun City appears to have a peculiar circular arrangement, breaking from the Valley of the Sun's typical grid system. When it was built, the idea was to have streets that surrounded a nucleus of recreation and shopping areas — Sun City is home to seven recreation centers and 11 golf courses.

Across the 14 square miles covered by the community, Sun City is — and has always been — a city of volunteers, Bearg says.

"It's always been an unincorporated area, so it's governed by the recreation centers, which are run by a board," Bearg says. "The board is made up of volunteers, the Sun City Homeowners Association is made up of volunteers, and we even have a sheriff's posse of volunteers who respond to calls in the community." — MOLLY J. SMITH

this month in history

- Architect Frank Lloyd Wright is born in Wisconsin on June 8, 1867.
- Apache Chief Cochise dies on June 8, 1874, and is buried in the Dragoon Mountains, in an area now known as Cochise Stronghold.
- Arizona Deputy Sheriff Billy Daniels is killed on June 10, 1885, two years after apprehending three of the five outlaws responsible for the Bisbee Massacre.
- The United States Supreme Court establishes the Miranda Rights on June 13, 1966. The decision was the result of Ernesto Miranda's case in Arizona.
- Lake Havasu City records Arizona's highest temperature on record — 128 degrees — on June 29, 1994.


GARY BENNETT

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS 50 Years Ago

The June 1962 issue of *Arizona Highways* focused on the transition from spring to summer and explored the outdoors with an opening piece about the "River of Mystery," more commonly known as the East Verde River. The issue also featured a series of butterfly photos.


MARK LIPCZYNSKI

PAYSON

ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS GREEN VALLEY AND UNION PARK, Payson was founded in 1882 and named for Levi Joseph Payson, who helped establish the town's post office. Two years later, residents held Payson's first rodeo, and since then it's become the "world's oldest continuous" rodeo, with events every year.

Though cowboy culture is big in the Central Arizona town, it's also a draw for artists and storytellers. Author Zane Grey visited in 1918, purchased two plots of land along Tonto Creek and built a cabin. Ultimately, he wrote 28 novels that were set in Arizona. The cabin burned during the Dude Fire in 1990, but local businesses raised funds to build a replica, which is located at Green Valley Park, just down the street from Main Street Mercantile.

"When my wife and I bought a building in Payson nearly eight years ago and opened our antiques store, we thought of the small town as no more than a strip of restaurants and small stores along State Route 87, a stop along the way to the Rim Country," says writer Bruce Itule, the Mercantile's owner. "We were so wrong. Payson is a small town that has not yet grown too large. It has a rich history, a wonderful park system and plenty to offer visitors and residents. It remains a jumping-off point to the Rim, Tonto Natural Bridge and desert and mountain lakes." — KELLY KRAMER

FOUNDED	AREA	ELEVATION	COUNTY
1882	19.5 square miles	4,900 feet	Gila

INFORMATION: Town of Payson, www.paysonrimcountry.org; Main Street Mercantile, 928-468-0526

IT'S HOT INSIDE

Although this Springerville hot spot offers a few less-spicy items — the garlic shrimp and carnitas are safe bets — Los Dos Molinos has always been about the burn. Start with the salsa, and go from there.

WALK INTO LOS DOS MOLINOS in Springerville and you might experience déjà vu. That's because — barring some buried past life experience — you've likely eaten at Los Dos Molinos in Phoenix. Specifically, the one near South Mountain. Despite the popularity of the capital-city location, keep in mind a couple of mostly forgotten facts: Springerville is where the Los Dos phenomenon got its start, and when owners Victoria and Eddie Chavez first planted their flag in the Valley of the Sun, it was in Mesa.

springerville

The original Los Dos Molinos began as a taco shop, and not surprisingly, the place was a success. By 1977, it expanded to a restaurant, serving up Victoria's spicy, New Mexican-style cuisine to the masses.

"It was my grandmother's dream to open up the restaurant," says Dominique De La Paz, the Chavezes' 25-year-old granddaughter. Not much has changed over the years. The menu still features many of the same offerings it did 35 years ago, including the chimichanga smothered in green or red chiles and the enchilada dinner with a fried egg on top. But Los Dos' most popular dish is the adovada ribs with a side of chili beans.

"It's super flavorful, super tender and super spicy," De La Paz says. While the restaurant offers a few less-spicy items — the garlic shrimp and carnitas are safe bets — Los Dos Molinos has always been about the burn. "All of our chiles are from New Mexico," De La Paz adds. "We get 20 sacks for the year, then we roast them and peel them." If you're unsure if you can handle it, De La Paz suggests trying the salsa first. "If you can eat the salsa, you'll be fine with our menu."

Besides its spicy reputation, Los Dos Molinos is also known for its kitschy-meets-kooky décor. The walls — and even the ceiling — at the original location are covered in vintage license plates, neon signs, shotgun shells, postcards, photographs, piñatas, baseball caps and chile peppers. To the untrained eye, the place appears covered in tchotchkes. However, one man's tchotchke is another man's wall art. According to De La Paz, the décor is a way of sharing the family's story. "Everything is connected to us in some way," she says.

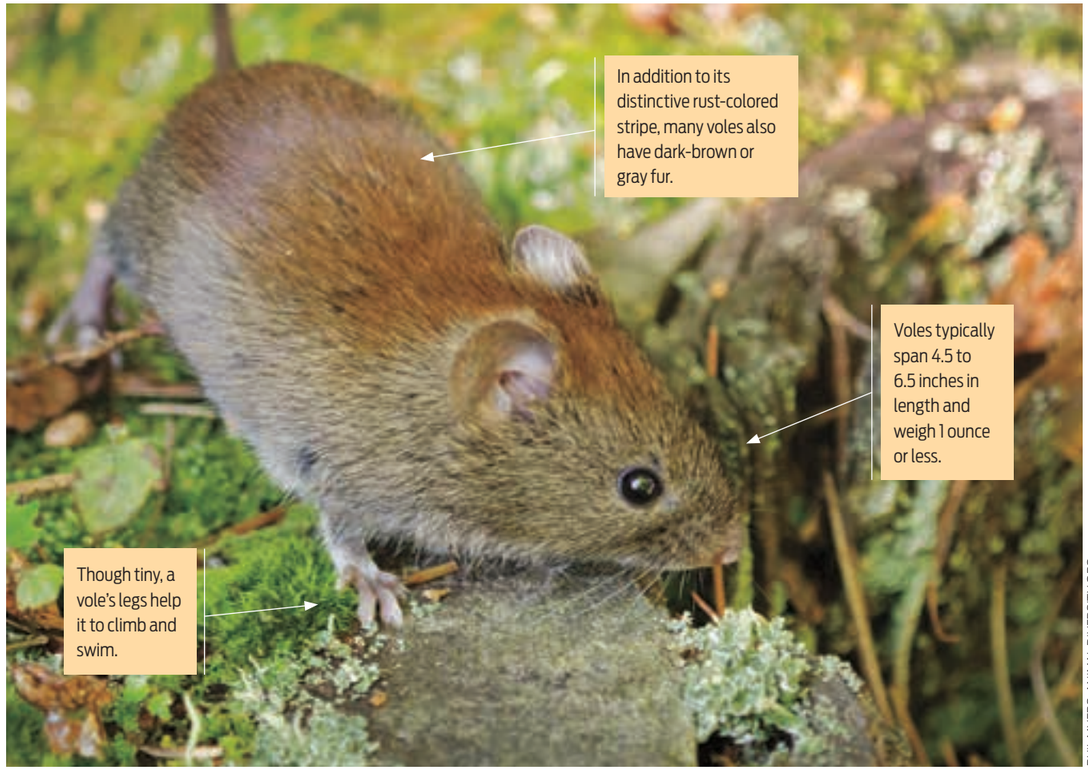
Family is at the heart of Los Dos Molinos. In fact, you'll find family members at every location. Victoria still goes to work, cooking up her spicy eats at the South Mountain location, and her youngest daughter is in Springerville. Now, a new generation, De La Paz's generation, is learning the ropes and the recipes.

— KATHY RITCHIE

Los Dos Molinos is located at 900 E. Main Street in Springerville. For more information, call 928-333-4846 or visit www.losdosmolinosaz.net.

MARK LIPCZYNSKI

For more dining in Arizona, visit www.arizonahighways.com/travel/dining.asp.



PHIL MYERS, ANIMAL DIVERSITY.ORG

High Jumpers

While strolling through an Arizona meadow, scan the ground for small, matted chutes of grass that signal runways, or escape routes, used by voles and other rodents to elude predators. When chased by hawks, owls and foxes, the Southern red-backed vole will scurry or hop along runways, jumping as high as 8 inches to clear obstacles.

The Southern red-backed vole is named for a rust-colored stripe that stretches across its back from head to tail. Gray or white fur frames its face and feet and thickens when winter arrives.

Voles remain active year-round, mainly at night, and dine with the seasons. Spring courses include grasses and leaves, while summer adds berries. Voles eat seeds and nuts in the fall, and switch to fungus and, occasionally, tree bark in the winter.

Forests and wet areas near marshes or streams across the state are prime habitats for voles, which nest under logs and brush or in burrows abandoned by other animals. Females give birth to two to eight young up to three times during their yearlong lifespan. Young voles are ready to reproduce after only three months.

— LEAH DURAN

nature factoid

RICK WILLIS

KOFA BARBERRY

As the name suggests, Kofa barberries are found in the Kofa Mountains, but you'll also find them in the Sand Tank and Ajo mountains. Although their geographic range is limited, the fact that they typically grow in the bottoms of deep, shady and rocky canyons means their survival is less threatened. The plants' bright yellow flowers appear mid-February through March, with small blue-black berries coming to fruition from late March into April.

june

FRANK ZULLO

Grand Canyon Star Party

June 16-23, Grand Canyon
Explore the wonders of the night sky on the Grand Canyon's South Rim with the Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association and on the North Rim with the Saguaro Astronomy Club of Phoenix. View Saturn, as well as a wide assortment of star clusters, galaxies and nebulae by night, and Mercury by day. This 22nd annual event endures, thanks to the area's dark skies and clean air. *Information: 928-638-7888 or www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/grand-canyon-star-party.htm*

TOUR MANAGEMENT BY SMITH KRAMER FINE ART SERVICES, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Frida Kahlo

Through June 3, Tucson
Frida Kahlo: Through the Lens of Nickolas Muray is an intimate look at one of the world's most prolific and well-known female artists, featuring 50 color and black-and-white photographs taken by her friend Nickolas Muray. *Information: 520-624-2333 or www.tucsonmuseumofart.org*

Mmm ... Beer!

June 23, Flagstaff
Beer connoisseurs, this event is for you. The 20th Annual Made in the Shade Beer Tasting Festival features more than 50 breweries from around the Southwest and West Coast, as well as several varieties to sample. *Information: 928-779-1775 or www.azbeer.com*

Prescott Rodeo

June 28-July 4, Prescott
Celebrate the 125th anniversary of the World's Oldest Rodeo. For an entire week, watch cowboys and cowgirls show off their skills as they help commemorate the history of the sport. *Information: www.worldsoldestrodeo.com*

Chillin' on Beale Street

June 16, Kingman
Talk about getting to know your neighbors. Come hang out at this annual block party in the heart of historic downtown Kingman. Enjoy a classic car show, food, music, entertainment and more at this popular event. *Information: 928-830-3755*

Music in the Garden

June 1-29, Phoenix
The spring concert series at Desert Botanical Garden is back and better than ever. Music in the Garden pairs great local bands — think blues, swing, R&B and jazz — with the most enchanting venue in the Valley. Food, as well as wine flights and wine by the bottle, will be available for purchase. *Information: 480-481-8188 or www.dbg.org*

Women's Photo Retreat

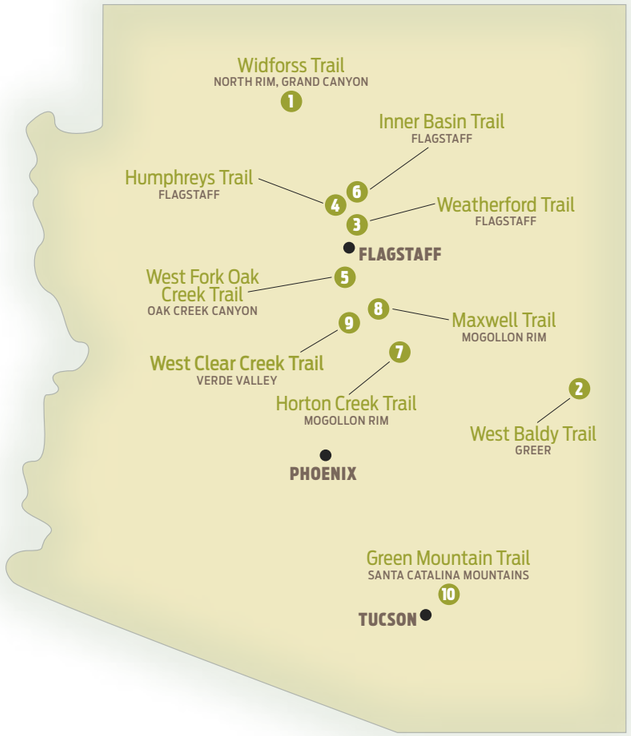
July 27-29, Grand Canyon
Calling all ladies! Join outdoor photographer Colleen Miniuk-Sperry on this special women's-only photography retreat at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Experience the supportive environment of an all-women group as you learn to master your camera and openly discuss topics specifically related to being a creative, successful photographer. *Information: 888-790-7042 or www.friendsofazhighways.com* AH

SUMMER HIKING GUIDE

Arizona is a dream state for hikers. There's a trail for everyone, and the weather allows for year-round hiking. Summer, however, is when most people hit the trail. Thus, our fifth-annual *Summer Hiking Guide*, which spotlights our top 10 trails, along with some bonus hikes in the White Mountains and five wheelchair-accessible trails that are just right this time of year.

BY ROBERT STIEVE

One of the most popular trails in the Coconino National Forest, the West Fork Oak Creek Trail requires several creek-crossings. | PAUL MARKOW



Editor's Note: What follows is our take on the 10 best summer hikes in Arizona. The key word in that sentence is "summer." That's why Bright Angel and Seven Falls and Hellsgate and all the rest aren't on the list. It's too hot to hike those trails this time of year. You'll also notice that we haven't included any hikes in the vicinity of the Wallow Fire — Mount Baldy is as close as we get. Although most of the trails in the White Mountains have been reopened since the fire, they haven't been cleaned up, and therefore pose a higher threat to a hiker's safety. Even after a fire is out, many hazards still exist, including stump holes, falling trees and the potential for flash floods. In addition, some areas in the fire zone remain closed, so if you do plan to hike there this summer, keep in mind that any violation of a closure order is punishable by a fine of up to $5,000 and/or six months in prison.

WHAT TO PACK IN YOUR BACKPACK

- Pen and paper
- Whistle
- Waterproof matches
- First-aid kit
- Pocketknife or multitool
- Extra clothing
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Water
- Compass (a GPS device does not replace a compass)
- GPS device
- Fire starter or tinder kit
- Pocket flashlight (with spare batteries)
- Extra food
- Space blanket (lightweight emergency shelter)
- Insect repellent

1

Widforss Trail

NORTH RIM, GRAND CANYON

Named for Gunnar Widforss, an artist who painted landscapes in the national parks in the 1920s and 1930s, this relatively easy trail follows the rim of the Grand Canyon to Widforss Point. And getting there, you'll pass through an idyllic forest of Colorado blue spruce, Engelmann spruce, white firs, Douglas firs and aspens, the latter of which can be seen growing in droves where recent fires have burned. You'll be amazed at how quickly the aspens move in and shoot up when the sun isn't blocked by the towering evergreens. Moseying along, you'll catch glimpses of the Grand Canyon to your left. Then, after about 30 minutes, you'll come to a short side trail that leads right to the rim, from which you can see into Transept Canyon below. The scenery stays much the same as you chalk up the miles, and after about an hour, the trail angles away from the rim and eventually leads to a lush valley, which ranks as the best part of the trail — other than the stretches with Canyon views, of course. Not far from the lush valley is the approach to Widforss Point. Although the trail stops short of the actual point, the views from the approach are out of this world.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 10 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Easy
ELEVATION: 8,200 to 7,811 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 36°13.422', W 112°03.896'
DIRECTIONS: From the Grand Canyon Lodge on the North Rim, drive 4 miles north and turn left onto the gravel road marked with a sign for the trailhead.
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: National Park Service fees apply.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: No
USGS MAP: Bright Angel Point
INFORMATION: Backcountry Office, Grand Canyon National Park, 928-638-7875 or www.nps.gov/grca

The Widforss Trail follows the North Rim of the Grand Canyon to Widforss Point, where sweeping views of the Canyon, including Zoroaster Temple, abound. | PAUL GILL

Foot Note: *At the height of Gunnar Widforss' career in 1929, just after his 50th birthday, the American stock market crashed, sending the artist into near obscurity and his paintings into the artistic abyss of the underappreciated. Although Widforss is considered one of the great painters of our national parks, he received limited exposure. Prior to an exhibit at the Museum of Northern Arizona in 2009-2010, there hadn't been a major Widforss exhibit since 1969. Widforss, whose obscurity remains a paradox, is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.*

2

West Baldy Trail

GREER

For peak-baggers in Arizona, Mount Baldy is one leg of the Triple Crown — along with Humphreys Peak and Escudilla Mountain (which is currently closed because of the Wallow Fire). The first 2 miles of Baldy cut through a series of wide alpine meadows and follow the West Fork of the Little Colorado River, climbing gradually. This is the busiest stretch, but as the trail gets a little tougher, the crowds thin out — the hike won't kill you, but the altitude does have an effect. After the 2-mile mark, the trail enters a thick forest dominated by spruce, firs and aspens — other than a few small meadows, the trail won't break out of the timber until the top. From there, it climbs gradually to a series of steep switchbacks, eventually merging with the East Baldy Trail near the Fort Apache Reservation boundary. The summit of Mount Baldy is on the reservation, and it's closed to nontribal members. You'll be tempted to "sneak" to the top; however, this is sacred land, and it should be respected. Trespassers who ignore the boundary are subject to fines and could have their packs confiscated. If you're a peak-bagger, here's the good news: The highest point of the ridge isn't Mount Baldy (11,403 feet), but an unnamed area (11,420 feet) on Forest Service land to the north.

West Baldy Trail near Greer cuts through lush alpine meadows and follows the West Fork of the Little Colorado River. | PAUL GILL

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 14 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 9,287 to 11,200 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 33°57.888', W 109°30.071'
DIRECTIONS: From Eagar, drive west on State Route 260 for 18.7 miles to State Route 273. Turn left and drive south for 7.6 miles to the trailhead at Sheeps Crossing.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAP: Mount Baldy
INFORMATION: Springerville Ranger District, 928-333-6200 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

Foot Note: *The Sitgreaves National Forest was named for Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves, a topographical engineer for the government who conducted the first scientific expedition across Arizona in the early 1850s. Later, the U.S. Army established a series of forts in New Mexico and Arizona. To supply these forts and settlements, a military road was built linking Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Camp Verde, Arizona. Part of this road, called the General Crook Trail, runs almost the length of the Sitgreaves National Forest. The Apache National Forest is named for the Native Americans who live in this area. Together, the forests are home to Arizona's scenic White Mountains.*

ARIZONA TRAIL TRIVIA

- The Arizona Trail is one of only 11 National Scenic Trails in the United States
- Southernmost point: U.S./Mexico border south of Sierra Vista in the Coronado National Memorial
- Northernmost point: Utah border 25 miles east of Fredonia at the BLM's State Line Campground
- High point: North Rim of the Grand Canyon (9,275 feet)
- Low point: Kelvin Bridge over the Gila River (1,768 feet)
- 93,000 feet of cumulative elevation gain from south to north
- Fastest crossing: Kurt Refsnider (7 days, 6 hours, 35 minutes) on a mountain bike
- Crosses 9 mountain ranges, the Grand Canyon and the Mogollon Rim
- Travels through 7 designated wilderness areas
- Traverses 4 national forests
- First section was dedicated on July 1, 1988
- Last section was dedicated on December 16, 2011
- 99% of the trail is located on public land
- Trail features 7 distinct bioregions
- Open 24 hours per day, 365 days per year

— Molly J. Smith

3

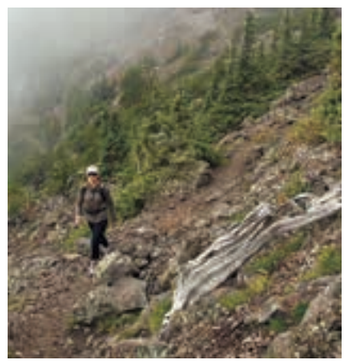
Weatherford Trail

FLAGSTAFF

This easy-to-follow route, which was grazed by the devastating Schultz Fire in June 2010, begins at Schultz Tank and climbs gradually through an open grove of ponderosas, past the Kachina Trail, and into the Kachina Peaks Wilderness. Just past the wilderness boundary, you'll skirt the ridge of a shaded canyon on your right. As you look across to the opposite slope, you'll see a kaleidoscope of greens. The colors of the trees are stunning. And so are the stately aspens you'll encounter along the trail. Moving on, the trail becomes a series of gradual switchbacks and the vegetation changes from ponderosas and aspens to alpine species including corkbark firs and Engelmann spruce. Eventually you'll get to a point where the forest opens up and views of the peaks steal the show. From there, it's a quick hop to the top of Doyle Saddle, the turnaround point for this hike. If it isn't stormy, settle in and enjoy the views of Northern Arizona.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 14.8 miles round-trip (to Doyle Saddle)
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 8,103 to 11,344 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 35°17.178', W 111°37.627'
DIRECTIONS: From Flagstaff, drive north on U.S. Route 180 for 2 miles to Forest Road 420 (Schultz Pass Road). Turn right onto FR 420 and continue past the end of the pavement for approximately 5.5 miles to the trailhead, which is on the right side of the road.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAP: Humphreys Peak
INFORMATION: Peaks Ranger District, 928-526-0866 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino



The Weatherford Trail climbs amid ponderosa pines, aspens and Engelmann spruce, and into the Kachina Peaks Wilderness. | TOM BEAN

Foot Note: *Beyond Doyle Saddle, the Weatherford Trail eventually leads to the Fremont-Agassiz Saddle. On the Doyle Saddle, you'll find the rusty remains of Allen Doyle's tourist camp, which are strewn about. Doyle was known as Arizona's foremost hunting guide in the early 19th century; however, there aren't many accounts of his colorful career. What we do know is that Doyle shared many adventures with famous author Zane Grey and, unknowingly, inspired many of the characters in Grey's Western novels.*

4

Humphreys Trail

FLAGSTAFF

Humphreys Peak is the king of the hills in Arizona. It's the pinnacle. The highest point in the state. If you can make it to the summit, which tops out at 12,633 feet, you've conquered all there is to conquer — from a hiking perspective. The trail begins at the far end of the lower parking lot for Arizona Snowbowl ski resort. After a short climb through a lush meadow of grasses and wildflowers, you'll start to smell the evergreens as the trail enters the deep forest. About the time the sky disappears, you'll be crossing into the Kachina Peaks Wilderness. From there, the well-maintained trail climbs for several miles to the Fremont-Agassiz Saddle, which marks the beginning of Arizona's only tundra region. At that level, nothing but bristlecone pines can survive, and even those disappear before the peak. The last mile or so to the summit is the most challenging stretch of the hike, but it's worth the effort. From the top, you'll be able to see the Grand Canyon and the Hopi mesas to the north, the White Mountains to the east and Oak Creek Canyon to the south. Look up, too. Thunderstorms and lightning strikes can roll in without warning. Don't press your luck.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 9 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Strenuous
ELEVATION: 9,327 to 12,633 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 35°19.881', W 111°42.694'
DIRECTIONS: From Flagstaff, drive north on U.S. Route 180 for 7 miles to Forest Road 516 (Snowbowl Road), turn right and continue another 6.3 miles to the lower parking lot. The trailhead is at the far end of the lot.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAP: Humphreys Peak
INFORMATION: Peaks Ranger District, 928-526-0866 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: *Humphreys Peak was named in 1870 for General Andrew A. Humphreys, a Union general during the Civil War. In 1911, when a General Land Office map from 1903 showed the name "San Francisco Peak" applied to what is now Humphreys Peak, the United States Board on Geographic Names approved the variant name. However, in 1933, the application was rectified and Humphreys Peak once again became Humphreys Peak.*

At 12,633 feet, Humphreys Peak (shown above, at right) is the highest point in Arizona. | SHANE McDERMOTT

Wheelchair-Accessible Trails

Especially in summer, hikers of all ages and abilities can enjoy these five accessible trails, which offer hard surfaces, minimal elevation changes and magnificent views:

1. Bunkhouse Trail

Red Rock State Park

This scenic trail is one of the highlights of the park, which is a 286-acre nature preserve and environmental-education center that offers spectacular scenery.
LENGTH: 0.75 miles
INFORMATION: 928-282-6907 or www.azstateparks.com/parks/rero

2. Rim Lakes Vista Trail

Mogollon Rim

This trail winds through the beautiful ponderosa-pine forests along the Mogollon Rim and offers panoramic vistas to the south. The main trailhead is located just off State Route 260 along Forest Road 300, immediately across from the Rim Visitor Center.
LENGTH: 2.5 miles
INFORMATION: 928-535-7300 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

3. Meadow Trail

Woods Canyon Lake

This trail, which begins at Woods Canyon Lake Vista and ends at Woods Canyon Lake Store, offers some great views of the lake.
LENGTH: 1.6 miles
INFORMATION: 928-535-7300 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

4. Lava Flow Trail

Sunset Crater National Monument

This is a self-guided loop trail that offers an introduction to the volcanic landscape at the base of Sunset Crater Volcano.
LENGTH: 0.25 miles
INFORMATION: 928-526-0502 or www.nps.gov/sucr

5. Groom Creek Nature Trail

Prescott

This short trail winds 1,500 feet through a forest of ponderosa pines, allowing visitors a chance to experience the sights and sounds of a quiet forest.
LENGTH: 0.3 miles
INFORMATION: 928-443-8000 or www.fs.usda.gov/prescott

White Mountains Trail System

One of the true hiking gems in Arizona is the White Mountains Trail System, which includes a series of loop trails and connector trails that vary in length and difficulty. The trails are open to mountain-bikers, horseback-riders and hikers. The trails are marked with blue diamonds (often bearing directional arrows), trail numbers or colored dots. Yellow dots indicate a short route back to the trailhead. Green dots indicate a connector trail. Red dots indicate a side trail to a point of interest or a particularly scenic vista. Here are three of our favorite trails in the system:

1. West Fork No. 94

LENGTH: 7 miles round-trip
RATING: Moderate
ELEVATION: 8,500-9,000 feet

2. East Fork No. 95

LENGTH: 14 miles round-trip
RATING: Moderate
ELEVATION: 8,200-9,300 feet

3. South Fork No. 97

LENGTH: 14 miles round-trip
RATING: Moderate
ELEVATION: 7,500-9,000 feet

• For more information, contact the Lakeside Ranger District at 928-368-2100 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf.

5

West Fork Oak Creek Trail

OAK CREEK CANYON

If you're looking for solitude, this hike won't deliver. On weekends and holidays, hundreds of people might be in your way. However, in the same way you don't avoid the Grand Canyon just because 5 million people a year visit the park, you don't want to leave the West Fork of Oak Creek off your summer-hiking hit list. There are many reasons why this is the most popular trail in the Coconino National Forest: the towering cliffs of Coconino sandstone, the Douglas firs and box elders and bigtooth maples, the perennial stream, the wild grapes, the mule deer and the list goes on. Another reason people flock to the West Fork is because it's easy to get to and easy to enjoy. That said, the trail does require some agility and a willingness to get your feet wet. There are steppingstones in most places, but there are no guarantees. The first 3 miles of the trail are well marked. After that, the last mile tends to be overgrown and even climbs out of the canyon at one point. The good news is that most people give up and head back before they get to this point. At the 4-mile mark, a decent-sized pool marks the end of the trail.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 8 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Easy
ELEVATION: 5,328 to 5,619 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 34˚59.434', W 111˚44.587'
DIRECTIONS: From Sedona, drive north on State Route 89A for 9.5 miles to the Call of the Canyon parking area.
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: The Forest Service requires a $5 parking permit along the highway and a $10-per-vehicle (up to five people) fee in the Call of the Canyon parking area.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAPS: Dutton Hill, Mountainaire, Wilson Mountain, Munds Park
INFORMATION: Red Rock Ranger District, 928-282-4119 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

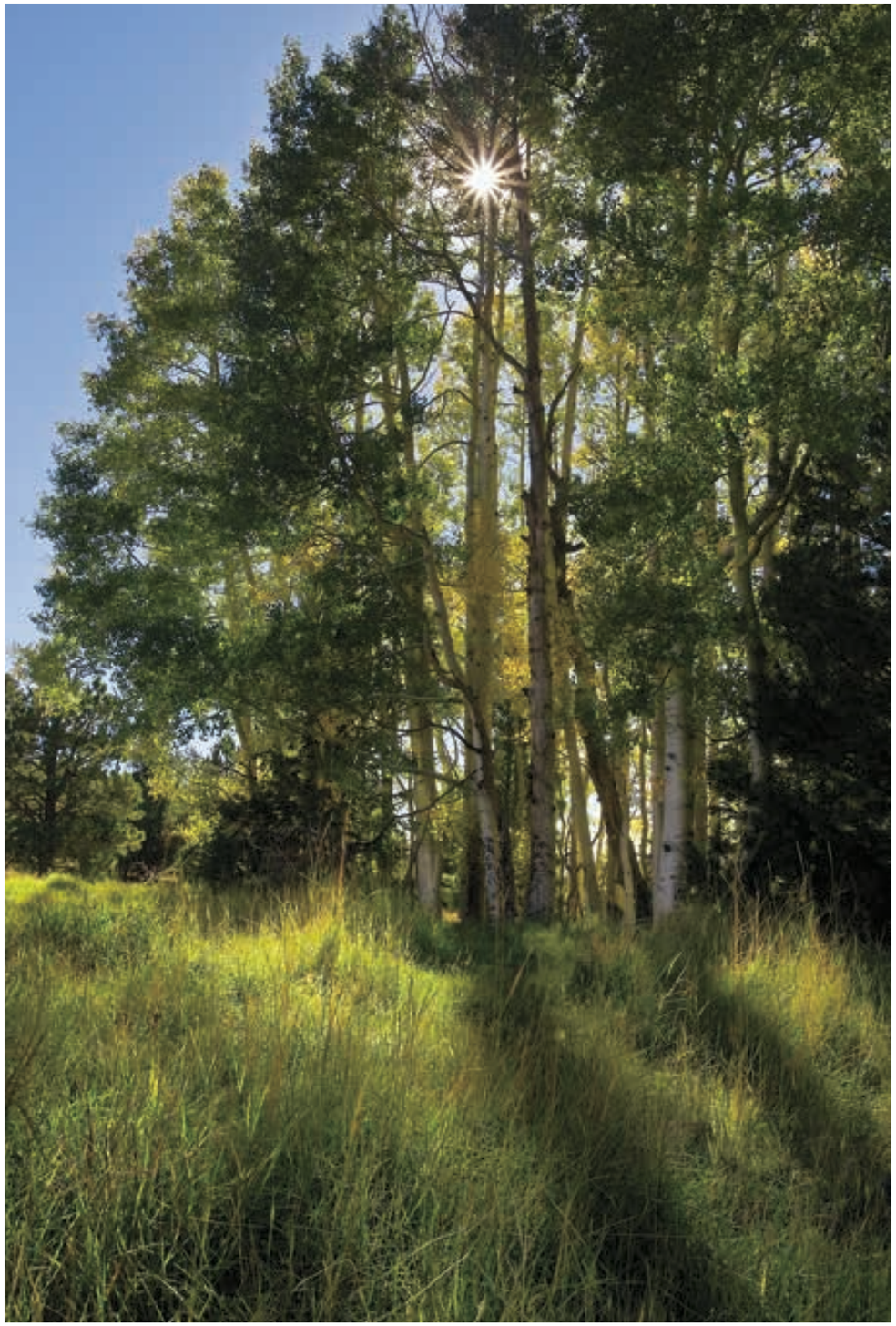
Foot Note: *A few hundred yards past the footbridge that leads to the West Fork Trail, you'll pass an old settlement that includes remnants of fireplaces, stone floors and a cliff house. They're leftovers from the Mayhew Lodge, an early 20th century dwelling. The homestead is believed to have been the inspiration for Zane Grey's book* Call of the Canyon. *In its heyday, the lodge was a favorite getaway of movie stars, politicians and writers, including Lord Halifax, President Herbert Hoover, Clark Gable, Jimmy Stewart and Walt Disney.*

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

On June 2, 2012, the American Hiking Society will celebrate its 20th annual National Trails Day. It's one more reason to get outside and experience the beauty of Arizona. To learn more about what's happening in your neck of the woods, contact John Michels, trail programs manager, at jmichels@americanhiking.org or visit www.americanhiking.org.

LEFT: A perennial stream feeds a multitude of grasses and ferns along the West Fork Oak Creek Trail.
| DEREK VON BRIESEN

RIGHT: The afternoon sun casts shadows among aspens along the Inner Basin Trail.
| SUZANNE MATHIA



6

Inner Basin Trail

FLAGSTAFF

This cool trail begins at Lockett Meadow, which is home to one of the best campgrounds in the state. From the campground, the route climbs gradually through a forest of ponderosa pines and aspens. Among the most impressive are the seven aspens you'll see clumped together about 30 minutes into the hike. They're off to the right, just past the gate you'll pass through. A few minutes later, you'll feel the forest open up a little, and you'll come to a major intersection. To the left is the route to Schultz Pass Road. To the right is an access road to the Bear Jaw and Abineau trails. From this point, the Inner Basin is less than a half-mile away. But before you get there, you'll pass a log pump house that shields a well that was drilled in 1971. Because the Inner Basin provides water for Flagstaff, there are several pump houses in the area. Beyond the well, the trail merges with an old jeep road that takes you the rest of the way. As you'll see, there's no place like the Inner Basin. With its lush meadows and the surrounding summits of the San Francisco Peaks, it's the perfect summer hike.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 4 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 8,567 to 9,403 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 35˚21.464', W 111˚37.118'
DIRECTIONS: From Flagstaff, drive north on U.S. Route 89 for 12 miles and turn left onto Forest Road 420, which is located across from the Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument entrance. Continue on FR 420 and follow the signs to Lockett Meadow Campground. The trailhead is well marked.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash), but only below the watershed cabin
USGS MAPS: Humphreys Peak, Sunset Crater West
INFORMATION: Peaks Ranger District, 928-526-0866 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: *Aspen trees are clonal organisms, meaning that all of the trees sprout from a common, massive root system — they're genetically identical "clones." Although the trees live for only 80 to 120 years, their root systems can live for thousands of years, making them one of the longest-living organisms in the world.*

"My grandmother started walking 5 miles a day when she was 60. She's 95 now, and we don't know where the hell she is."

— ELLEN DEGENERES

7

Horton Creek Trail

MOGOLLON RIM

Named for the creek that's named for settler L.J. Horton, this trail begins at the foot of the Mogollon Rim, about 150 feet from the Upper Tonto Creek Campground, and follows an old logging road that parallels the stream. The first quarter-mile or so is an easy pine-needle-covered path that cuts through a grove of ponderosas and aspens. To this point, you won't hear any water, but once you pass the Forest Service gate, you'll start hearing the creek. For most of the hike, you'll be within a few hundred yards of the water. Continuing uphill, past the lush colonies of roses, wild grapes, ferns and strawberries, you'll come to a monstrous alligator juniper at the 1.5-mile mark. The surrounding maples and Douglas firs are impressive, as well. The nature of the trail stays about the same until it nears the top, where a series of switchbacks leads away from the creek. Don't be fooled by that. At the 4-mile mark, the Horton Creek Trail intersects the Highline Trail and quickly arrives at Horton Spring, which pours out of the rocks about 30 feet above the stream and nurtures the lush surroundings made up of horsetails, mosses and grasses. These are the headwaters of the creek, and the turnaround point of the hike.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 8 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 5,360 to 6,700 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 34°20.394', W 111°05.732'
DIRECTIONS: From Payson, drive east on State Route 260 for 17 miles to Tonto Creek Road (Forest Road 289) near Kohls Ranch, turn left and drive 1 mile to the Upper Tonto Creek Campground. The trailhead is at the campground.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAP: Promontory Butte
INFORMATION: Payson Ranger District, 928-474-7900 or www.fs.usda.gov/tonto

A small waterfall tumbles into a maze of branches along the Horton Creek Trail. | SUZANNE MATHIA

DID YOU KNOW?

The average male, weighing 190 pounds, burns 517 calories in an hour of hiking. A woman weighing 163 pounds burns 444. The calories burned per minute by an average-sized man are 9, while an average-sized woman burns 7.

Foot Note: *Located just 3 miles east of this trail is the place where Zane Grey's cabin once stood. The cabin, which was built in the 1920s and destroyed by the Dude Fire in 1990, was a historic landmark of sorts. The acclaimed author of* Riders of the Purple Sage *and other famous Western novels penned many of his classics at the cabin. Today, a replica cabin is open for tours in nearby Payson.*

8

Maxwell Trail

MOGOLLON RIM

This trail, which is located at the upper end of the West Clear Creek Wilderness, begins with a series of steep switchbacks. Through the trees, you'll catch a glimpse of the lush canyon below. Like many trails on the Mogollon Rim, this one is rocky and loose in places. It's steep, too, so be careful. After about 25 minutes, you'll catch the first sounds of the creek ... the highlight of the hike. In all, it's about 45 minutes from top to bottom, and along the way you'll go from a transition zone of ponderosas, Douglas firs and Gambel oaks to a riparian zone of red-osier dogwoods, ash, willows and box elders. The trail ends at the creek, which provides habitat for bluegills, chubs and suckers. Dragonflies like the moisture, as well. And so will you. The sound of the creek, the sunlight dancing off the water, the grass, the shrubs, the trees surrounded by large rock walls ... that's the climax of the Maxwell Trail.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 1.4 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 6,710 to 6,089 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 34°33.345', W 111°24.295'
DIRECTIONS: From Clints Well at the junction of State Route 87 and Forest Highway 3, drive north on FH 3 for approximately 7 miles to Forest Road 81. Turn left (west) onto FR 81 and continue approximately 4 miles to Forest Road 81E. Go left on FR 81E to the end of the road, which is where the trailhead is located.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: High-clearance vehicle
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAP: Calloway Butte
INFORMATION: Mogollon Rim Ranger Station, 928-477-2255 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: *The road to this trail takes you past a former horse ranch known as Poor Farm, which was homesteaded in 1908 by a young man from Kansas named Irvin Henry Walker. Walker and his cowboy cohorts constructed a very basic log cabin next to the pasture where they kept their horses. During a snowstorm, Walker, his partner Norvell Cherry and some fellow cowboys gathered around the cabin's wood stove, trying to stay warm in their sadly constructed shelter. Cherry is said to have told Walker, "If you ask me, this is a damn poor farm." That's allegedly how Poor Farm got its name.*

The Maxwell Trail ends at West Clear Creek, which attracts a variety of birds and other wildlife. | DEREK VON BRIESEN

The 10 Commandments of Hiking

Never hike alone.

Tell someone where you're hiking, the route you'll be taking and when you'll be home.

Carry identification (driver's license, etc.) and the name and telephone number of whom to call in case of emergency.

Before you leave home, check the forecast, and pay attention to the weather while you're on the trail.

Study the maps before you go, and always carry a compass, not just a GPS.

On the trail, know where you're going and where you are in relation to the map you're carrying.

Take plenty of food, and carry more water than you think you'll need.

There's no such thing as too much sunscreen.

Don't overestimate your abilities.

Adhere to the Leave No Trace principles (see below).

LEAVE-NO-TRACE PRINCIPLES:

- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly and pack out all of your trash.
- Leave what you find.
- Respect wildlife and minimize impact.
- Be considerate of others.

LEFT: Alder leaves reflect in the waters of West Clear Creek. | NICK BEREZENKO

ABOVE: The Green Mountain Trail follows a series of switchbacks through a forest of ponderosa pines and Douglas firs. | RANDY PRENTICE

HYPOTHERMIA

Also known as exposure, hypothermia is the lowering of the body's core temperature, and it isn't just a cold-weather concern. In fact, most cases of hypothermia occur in the summertime, when the temperatures are well above freezing — usually between 30 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

SYMPTOMS:

- Shivering (first warning sign)
- Goose bumps on skin
- Drowsiness
- Fatigue
- Loss of coordination
- Incoherence, mumbling, stammering
- Hallucinations (advanced symptom)
- Pale appearance
- A warming sensation (can be a sign of very serious hypothermia; check other symptoms carefully)

9

West Clear Creek Trail

VERDE VALLEY

The centerpiece of this hike, and the body of water for which it's named, is West Clear Creek, an idyllic stream that winds for nearly 40 miles through some of the most scenic and least-visited terrain in Arizona. From the trailhead, the route passes under a canopy of impressive sycamores — you'll also see cottonwoods, Arizona walnuts, willows and ash along the creek. Initially, the trail piggybacks an old ranch road on the north bank of the creek. Then, after about a mile, it cuts south for the first of four stream-crossings. Throughout most of the year, other than the wet season, it's a simple hop, skip and jump to the other side. Heading east on the south side of the perennial creek, the trail meanders through a lush riparian forest and quickly comes to the second creek-crossing, followed by the official boundary of the West Clear Creek Wilderness. Eventually, after 5.5 miles and a third and fourth creek-crossing, you'll come to a point where the trail veers northward from the creek. This is the turnaround point.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 11 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Easy
ELEVATION: 3,700 to 4,100
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 34°32.338', W 111°41.510'
DIRECTIONS: From Camp Verde, go southeast on State Route 260 for 6 miles to Forest Road 618. Turn left onto FR 618 and drive 2.2 miles to Forest Road 215. Turn right onto FR 215 and continue approximately 3 miles to the Bull Pen Ranch Trailhead.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: High-clearance recommended
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAPS: Walker Mountain, Buckhorn Mountain
INFORMATION: Red Rock Ranger District, 928-282-4119 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: *Hundreds of years ago, the West Clear Creek drainage was also home to the Sinaguan people, who left behind ruins, tools and other artifacts that are now scattered throughout the wilderness area. If you're lucky enough to stumble upon such a treasure, enjoy it with your eyes only — do not touch it, move it or remove it. Leave it as it is for the next lucky explorer.*

10

Green Mountain Trail

SANTA CATALINA MOUNTAINS

Like other trails in the Catalinas, this one can be done as a one-way hike using a car-shuttle system, or as a round-tripper. The upper trailhead is located at the San Pedro Vista and the lower trailhead is at the General Hitchcock Campground. For this listing, the route begins up top at San Pedro, and within a few minutes, the trail intersects a side route that leads to the top of Green Mountain. Stay left and gear up for a series of steep switchbacks. At this point, the surrounding forest is primarily ponderosa pines and Douglas firs. It's lush and green. Moving on, the evergreens are replaced by oaks, manzanitas, yuccas and beargrass. The views open up, as well. Thirty minutes later, the trail switchbacks uphill over some boulders and arrives at Bear Saddle, which sits at an elevation of 6,950 feet and serves as the head of Bear Canyon. From there, the trail follows Bear Canyon for just under 2 miles to the General Hitchcock Campground. This homestretch, which is probably the most beautiful part of the trail, takes you back into the ponderosas and Douglas firs, as well as Arizona cypress, before bottoming out at the campground.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 7.8 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 6,000 to 7,300 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 32°24.007', W 110°41.404'
DIRECTIONS: From Tanque Verde Road in Tucson, drive 4.2 miles on Catalina Highway to the Forest Service boundary and continue 17.5 miles to the San Pedro Vista.
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: A $5 day pass (per vehicle) is required.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAP: Mount Bigelow
INFORMATION: Santa Catalina Ranger District, 520-749-8700 or www.fs.usda.gov/coronado

Foot Note: *Nearby Pusch Ridge was named for pioneer George Pusch, who came to Arizona from Germany in the 1870s. In 1874, he established the Steam Pump Ranch near the base of the ridge. At the time, it was one of the largest cattle ranches in the Arizona Territory. In 1978, the Pusch Ridge Wilderness was created to preserve and protect the dwindling desert bighorn sheep population in the area. However, due to increased residential and commercial development, the sheep population has decreased dramatically. The last documented sighting was in 2005.*

WHEN YOU'RE DONE HIKING

The first thing you'll want to do when you've finished your hike is call your friends or family and let them know you've made it safely back to your vehicle. Obviously, you might not have cell service in some of the more remote areas, but call as soon as you can. After the hike, you'll also want to put on some dry clothes and drink some water. Even if you're not thirsty, there's a good chance you'll be a little dehydrated at the end of your hike. Finally, drive carefully, download your photos when you get home, share them with your friends and encourage them to follow in your footsteps. As John Muir once wrote: "Few are altogether deaf to the preaching of pine trees. Their sermons on the mountains go to our hearts; and if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish." AH

RANDY PRENTICE

For more summer travel ideas, scan this QR code or visit www.arizonahighways.com/travel.asp.

MOTHER NATURE LIVES HERE

IT'S HARD TO STAND OUT IN A STATE THAT'S HOME TO THE GRAND CANYON. JUST ASK THE CHIRICAHUAS, MONUMENT VALLEY, HANNAGAN MEADOW, SEDONA AND ALL OF THE "LESSER" CANYONS—SABINO, ARAVAIPA, SYCAMORE AND OAK CREEK. DESPITE WHAT VINCE LOMBARDI MIGHT HAVE SAID ABOUT FINISHING SECOND, THE RUNNERS-UP IN ARIZONA ARE SOMETHING SPECIAL. IN FACT, WE'RE PRETTY SURE THAT MOTHER NATURE SPENDS HER SUMMERS IN EITHER SEDONA OR OAK CREEK CANYON. TAKE A LOOK AT THIS MONTH'S PORTFOLIO AND YOU'LL SEE WHY.

A PORTFOLIO EDITED BY JEFF KIDA

PRECEDING PANEL: An arching rainbow appears to shower light onto Mitten Ridge (left) and the Broken Arrow Trail area (center), east of Sedona, in a stormy-day photograph made from the trail around the city's airport mesa. Munds Mountain is in the background. | MARK FRANK

THIS PANEL: Slide Rock State Park, located in Oak Creek Canyon north of Sedona, reveals its beauty through reflections. | DEREK VON BRIESEN

"Even if you think the Big Bang created the stars,
don't you wonder who sent the flowers?"

— ROBERT BRAULT

ABOVE: Blue lupines bloom in Oak Creek Canyon. | DEREK VON BRIESEN

RIGHT: Storm clouds gather over Indian Point, off Schnebly Hill Road northeast of Sedona. | SHANE MCDERMOTT

"I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright."

— HENRY DAVID THOREAU

PRECEDING PANEL: Oak Creek cascades over well-worn rocks along the Allen's Bend Trail. | DEREK VON BRIESEN

LEFT: The low light of sunset accentuates red-rock hues in the Broken Arrow Trail area near Sedona. | MARK FRANK AH

A BURNING ISSUE

It's been 10 years since the Rodeo-Chediski Fire burned 468,000 acres along the Mogollon Rim, and just a year since the Wallow Fire became the largest in Arizona history, scorching 538,000 acres of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. Although wildfires are to be expected in a place as arid as Arizona, "megafires" are out of the norm — the result, some say, of a flawed fire-management policy.

BY KELLY KRAMER

The Wallow Fire, which burned in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests during the summer of 2011, consumed more than 538,000 acres, making it the largest wildfire in Arizona history.

RICK D'ELIA

TOP: June marks the 10th anniversary of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, which burned along the Mogollon Rim. It was the result of two separate fires that merged. Both fires were human-caused. | REUTERS CORBIS/JEFF TOPPING

ABOVE: Firefighters line up for a meal before their shift battling the Wallow Fire. | RICK D'ELIA

THE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT against Leonard Gregg was a short one.

"On or about June 18, 2002, in the District of Arizona, defendant did, willfully and without lawful authority, set on fire timber, underbrush or grass or other inflammable material upon the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, near Cibecue, Arizona, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1855."

When Daniel Hawkins, a special agent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, filed the complaint in U.S. District Court, he attached a statement of probable cause that outlined exactly where and how the fire began. And he swore under penalty of perjury that those details were true.

They were.

Gregg, an Apache living in Cibecue, had always been "fascinated by wildfires," according to an Associated Press interview with his brother, Wilson. His family said he was brain-damaged, the result of his mother's alcohol abuse. Friends said he'd dropped out of school in the eighth grade. Despite his troubles, Gregg made $8 an hour working as a wildland firefighter. He decided he wanted more work.

So, on June 18, 2002, he set two fires. The first, the Pina Fire, ignited at around 10:45 a.m. just south of the Germantown area of the Fort Apache Reservation. It didn't spread, thanks to the efforts of the tribal fire department. Gregg then moved 2 miles northeast of Cibecue and started his second blaze, which officials named the Rodeo Fire. First responders couldn't contain the flames, and by the following morning, they'd spread to more than 600 acres.

Then the wind kicked up.

THERE ARE A HANDFUL OF FACTORS that contribute to a wildfire's spread — humidity, fuel, wind, terrain, oxygen. When Leonard Gregg started the Rodeo Fire 10 years ago, he knew that each of those elements was just right.

"Any factor you want to pick was at a maximum," says Dr. Stephen Pyne, a Regents' professor at Arizona State University and author of several books on national fire policy, including *America's Fires: A Historical Context for Policy and Practice* (Forest History Society, 2010). "As a firefighter, [Gregg] knew that. His knowledge of fire factors was like a paramedic knowing to check for breathing, bleeding, that type of thing."

Indeed, Arizona was in the midst of one of its driest spells on record. From June 2001 through May 2002, measurable precipitation in the state was at its lowest level since 1895, when record-keeping about such things began. The winter snowpack was a dismal 5 percent of normal, making spring runoff only 24 percent of the norm.

The only thing that could breathe life back into the parched earth was the monsoon season, but the long-range forecast called for clear skies and warm temperatures. Making matters worse, "There were prevailing winds out of the southwest, made even more intense by solar heating," Pyne says. "The fire burned along a southwestern-facing slope, and fuels were at maximum combustibility. By the time the second fire began, Rodeo was already completely out of control."

Rodeo's counterpart, Chediski, was ignited on June 20, when lost hiker Valinda Jo Elliot set a signal fire. She'd been wandering aimlessly for three days. Dehydrated and panicked, she heard the hum of a helicopter and decided the only way to survive was to set a signal fire. Though Elliot was rescued, her blaze quickly grew out of control. It was the last act in a series of events that would lead to the single-largest fire in Arizona history.

"It would have been criminally negligent to put crews between the two fires," Pyne says. "So, they were allowed to merge. Firefighters might have had a pretty good sense of where the fires were going to go, and they might have been able to work the flanks, but there was no way to escape. They also had to take the cost and complexity of running two parallel lines into consideration."

By June 22, the fires had combined to form what several newspapers dubbed "The Monster," which burned until July 7. It took 1,900 firefighters to contain the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, along with 23 helicopters, nine air tankers, 237 fire engines, 89 dozers, 95 water trucks and four incident-management teams. More than 30,000 people were evacuated from their homes, and 450 houses were lost to the fire. The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition estimates the total cost of Rodeo-Chediski to be in the $308 million range, although the fire's long-term financial impact on the tribe or the forest can't really be determined.

The aesthetic effects of the fire are far more apparent.

It's been a decade now since the fire scorched 468,000 acres along the Mogollon Rim, and traveling east on State Route 260 between Payson and Heber-Overgaard, there are places where the fire's scars still cut deep.

Skeletal trees linger in stands, their black and gray limbs reaching toward light that doesn't matter — dead plants don't photosynthesize. Some have fallen, some are trying, others sway in the

softest whisper of a breeze. Fragile.

In some places, seedlings have sprung from the ground, their bright-green needles wispy and thin and reminiscent of their forebears. The landscape is stark in places, but Pyne reminds us that fire can be good for the Earth.

"When Rodeo-Chediski died, it just kind of blew over the rim," he says. "The density of the forest changed, the land sloped down. The gross geography of the fire shifted enough so that it ended.

"Fires have been a part of the system for a very long time," he continues. "Taking fire out of an ecosystem is a big problem. Fire rejuvenates the landscape and acts as a recycling mechanism. Trees, flowers and grasses revive. Certain things only sprout after a fire, then they go back to their seed banks. Fire rearranges a landscape's structure and promotes grasses and low vegetation over big trees. It rearranges the possibility for future fires."

Although it's impossible to forecast fire, policymakers, politicians and environmentalists have long grappled over how best to manage it.

ON ONE SIDE OF THE FIRE-POLICY equation are the foresters and scientists who argue that controlled burns and forest-thinning might be the key to avoiding explosive fires. On the other side are some environmentalists who counter that the forest is better left alone — a tree sanctuary, instead of a tree farm.

In *Prelude to Catastrophe: Recent and Historic Land Management Within the Rodeo-Chediski Fire Area*, a report prepared by the Center for Biological Diversity, the Sierra Club and the Southwest Forest Alliance, the study's authors contend that timber sales and the development of forest roads had little positive — if any — effect on fire reduction. In fact, the extensive study cites a U.S. Forest Service report to Congress that stated: "Timber harvest, through its effect on forest structure, local microclimate, and fuels accumulation, has increased fire severity more than any other recent human activity."

The report studied 10 timber sales that took place in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests between 1990 and 2002. One of the timber sales, "Jersey Horse," focused on the logging of large trees — 87 percent of the volume of pines and other species cut from the forest were larger than 16 inches in diameter. Thirty-two percent of the volume came from trees larger than 24 inches in diameter. Additional studies have shown that it's not the big, old-growth trees that burn most during a fire; it's the small trees, in addition to grasses and low shrubs.

So, the organizations represented by the report concluded that logging could not have — and did not — prevent the spread of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, further arguing that "fire hazard was extreme in the cutover areas of the national forests of the Southwest" and that the hazard was five times greater on timber-sale areas along the Mogollon Rim than in unlogged areas.

"Indeed, large fires — 'megafires' — are often associated with logging," Pyne says. "It leaves the little stuff to burn and takes the big, fire-resistant trees. One is not a surrogate for the other."

Former hotshot and U.S. Forest Service contract writer Paul Keller disagrees. In his 2005 article *Arizona's Rodeo-Chediski Fire: A Forest Health Problem*, he writes, "There's no question that the abundance of trees, coupled with a parching drought and fire-conducive weather conditions, fueled the Rodeo-Chediski explosion."

And, of course, there's the issue of wildlife as it relates to the liquidation of old-growth forest. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, extensive logging in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests drew the ire of both the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1993, Fish and Wildlife listed the Mexican spotted owl as a "threatened species," noting the prevalence of logging in the forests. By 1998, Game and Fish had issued a similar report about the northern goshawk, declaring that the bird species was no longer self-sustaining. That report also lamented the loss of old-growth trees.

Timber sales. Owls. Road density. Prescribed burns. Public lands versus wild lands. Risk to firefighters. All of these and more are cogs in the fire-policy wheel, a slowly turning circle that won't stop spinning anytime soon.

Prescribed burns became part and parcel of forest-health policies decades ago. Nevertheless, they're a major sticking point in the debate.

"The American fire community accepted the need to reinstate fire a long time ago," Pyne says. "Prescribed burns, slashing and burning — those aren't new controversies. The problem is making things happen on the ground. The whole point of national fire policy on federal lands over the past 40 years has been to increase the amount of burning. We're getting it, so what's the problem? People aren't getting it the way they want."

Timber sales. Owls. Road density. Prescribed burns. Public lands versus wild lands. Risk to firefighters. All of these and more are cogs in the fire-policy wheel, a slowly turning circle that won't stop spinning anytime soon.

ABOVE, LEFT: Because of high winds, the Wallow Fire burned in a mosaic pattern, scorching some trees, like these south of Alpine, and barely touching others. | AP PHOTO/SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN

ABOVE, RIGHT: Young plants emerge amid charred trees in the aftermath of the Wallow Fire. | JACK DYKINGA

And that's where identity politics come into play. Pyne contends that the issue has really been between certain categories of environmentalists, certain categories of the business community and the politicians who represent them — those who want purely wild landscapes and those who want landscapes where people can work and live.

People want to escape to the wilderness. They want to build homes and visit restaurants and hunt and fish and hike and get away from the things that give them anxiety in the cities and their suburbs. They create civilization in areas that have long been purely wild.

The result? "You change how you use land. We're putting all these houses in and creating problems — that's part of it, part of the reason we're seeing so many megafires," Pyne says. "But fire policy can't stand outside the political spectrum. It's caught up in the same type of polarity. If you can't agree, and you can't even agree on the legitimacy of the process to come to a solution, then you're not going to accomplish anything."

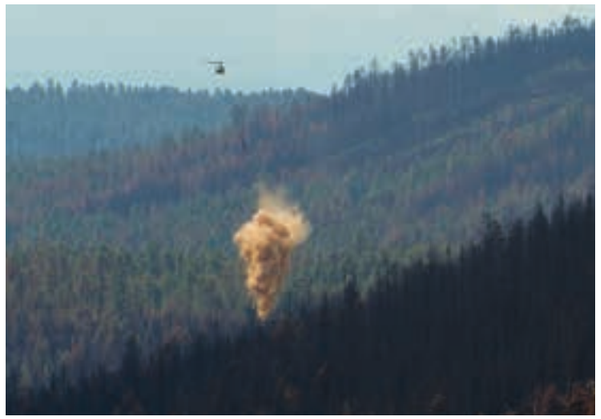
And one of the most polarizing issues when it comes to fire management is the issue of prescribed burns, a practice used by foresters to maintain low levels of needles, dead leaves and other ground debris that provides fuel for a wildfire.

Some groups, such as Citizens Against Polluted Air, advocate mulching over burning as a means of reducing smoke inhalation. They claim that wood smoke is toxic. The groups refer to Environmental Protection Agency studies that indicate an increased risk of cancer, stroke and other serious illnesses in people exposed to the smoke from prescribed burns. Another citizens' group, Mad Mothers of America, prefers a bolder approach to promoting its message and refers to foresters as "Drip-Torch Baby Killers." The group's website features graphic imagery and a warning that reads: "Armed with fully loaded drip torches and a cold-blooded attitude, the U.S. Forest Service is continuing their annual campaign of death against our innocent children. Using drip torches and fire bombs, they are spreading prescribed fire and toxic smoke across the United States. EPA studies show that wood smoke kills children, but officials don't seem to care as long as they can burn enough to meet their budgetary goals."

Those officials are the men and women of the federal government. Both the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service have advocated the practice of prescribed burning — in conjunction with canopy-thinning and the removal of small trees in the forest understory — as a "means of restoring a more natural structure and function to ponderosa pine vegetation communities." Both agencies abide by the 50-page *Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide*.

The idea, according to a report published by the Arizona Cooperative Extension, is to reduce highly inflammable fuels, break up fuel continuity and reduce the intensity of wildland fires. "Contrary to popular opinion, [prescribed burns] are not intended to prevent fire; rather, their purpose is to reduce intensity to the point that structures are at greatly reduced risk and firefighters can safely work in close proximity to the fire when conducting suppression activities," the report reads.

Of course, the issue of firefighter safety is paramount in the way wildland fires are harnessed, contained and, ultimately, extinguished.



"Our institutions, our understanding of fire, and our policies and practices of fire create a very strong push not to put firefighters at risk," Pyne says. "We're backing off and allowing fires to have more room, and that translates to bigger fires, like Wallow."

ARIZONA WATCHED the Wallow Fire burn last summer — a showy, top-of-the-newscast, violent manifestation of just how little headway has been made in finding common ground in the fire-policy debate. History, it seems, does repeat itself.

Caleb Joshua Malboeuf and his cousin, David Wayne Malboeuf, trekked into the Bear Wallow Wilderness on May 28, 2011. After cooking dinner over their ringed campfire, according to a federal criminal complaint, they allowed the fire to burn out on its own and went to sleep. The following morning, the cousins lit a new campfire and cooked breakfast. After several hours — and believing that the campfire was out — the Malboeufs went on a hike, leaving their two dogs and all of their camping equipment behind.

"They stated that they believed their campfire was out because David threw a candy wrapper in the fire just prior to their departure and it did not melt," the criminal complaint reads.

A few hours later, the men returned to a wall of smoke and fire. They couldn't reach the campsite to cut loose their dogs — both blue heelers. The Malboeufs ran toward the Black River, where they camped again overnight before hiking to a forest road and meeting an Apache County sheriff's deputy, who drove them to their car and alerted the Forest Service to the fire.

By May 30, the Wallow Fire had spread to roughly 1,445 acres. Between June 1 and June 2, the fire exploded from 6,699 acres to more than 40,500. Fueled by wind, it threatened Hannagan Meadow as it spread north, blowing across tree crowns in some places and smoldering in others. June 7 marked the fire's most expansive day — it grew by more than 77,700 acres, threatening Greer, Eagar and Springerville. Evacuation orders were in place, businesses shut down, and more and more firefighters arrived from across the country.

Amanda Lane was one of them. A 25-year-old hotshot from the Bitterroot Valley in Montana, Lane had been fighting fires for three seasons when she was dispatched to Wallow.

"This fire is particularly challenging because of the wind," she said during an interview near Tal-Wi-Wi Lodge in Alpine, where she and her crew were taking a break between their eight-hour assignments. "Sometimes, you're a lookout, trying to spot smoke columns. Sometimes, you're cutting hot lines. Sometimes, you're told you're going to mop up."

ABOVE: In the months following the Wallow Fire, flooding and erosion were major concerns in the White Mountains. | JACK DYKINGA

ABOVE, RIGHT: A butterfly is seemingly undisturbed by smoke and flames from burn operations in the Lee Valley area on the western flank of the Wallow Fire. | RICK D'ELIA

RIGHT: A helicopter drops straw bales onto an area burned by the Wallow Fire. The bales help prevent storm runoff. | JACK DYKINGA

Mopping up is the process by which crews make sure that hazardous material is cleared after part of a fire is contained. Often, it involves clearing both sides of the fire line of stumps, singed brush and low-hanging tree limbs, as well as extinguishing any smoldering debris. It isn't easy work, but Lane didn't mind.

"It runs in my family," she said. "My dad was a smoke jumper, and I grew up in the outdoors. I love the hard work, too."

The same seemed true of Jeff Riepe, who oversaw a fire line outside Alpine. As he explained the two-track road that helped hold the line and stop the fire from spreading to the town, he was clear about his mission.

"This is just what we do," he said. "And it's a direct response to the national fire plan. This is what we train for, but there are times when bravado shouldn't be displayed. Sometimes, we need to leave an area and then come back."

"LETTING IT BURN" MIGHT BE WHAT happened in places along U.S. Route 191, south of Alpine. There, Wallow cut a vicious swath, leaving blackened toothpicks in place of trees. On June 12 — approximately two weeks into the fire's run — the sky choked with gray smoke and the wind blew charred leaves across the highway. Bark peeled from aspens the way skin peels after a sunburn.

The scene was post-apocalyptic at best, but there was evidence of where the firefighters had been. They dug holes around tree trunks to stop the fire's spread. Their boot prints were all over the piles of ash.

That same day, residents of Springerville and Eagar received word that they were allowed to return to their homes. The fire had grown only by 8,000 acres in the past 24 hours, and a herd of elk found a spot to graze along the side of the road, seemingly unfazed by the smoke and the char from nearby backfires.

In all, the Wallow Fire burned 538,049 acres. It overshadowed Rodeo-Chediski as the largest wildfire in Arizona history and required more than 4,000 firefighters to contain it, along with two helicopters, nine bulldozers, 26 fire engines and 10 water tenders. The pilot of a DC-10 dispatched to drop water over the fire referred to it as "massive" and "impressive."

The fire, whipped by wind, burned in a mosaic, leaving a weird visual tapestry of brown, green and black. It cost an estimated $109 million to contain.

And it nearly destroyed Escudilla Mountain. "Life in Arizona was bounded under foot by grama grass, overhead by sky, and on the horizon by Escudilla," wrote Aldo Leopold in *Round River* in 1953. The view of that horizon has been altered dramatically. Ironically, Escudilla's fire tower survived Wallow, and, as of this writing, it still stood amid a wasteland of trees. Forest officials say that it will be razed sometime this summer.

There were bouts of localized flooding when the monsoon finally arrived in Eastern Arizona, and it's impossible to say what will happen in terms of erosion and flooding in the years to come.

But the aftermath of Wallow isn't all bad. Just a few months after the fire, grasses and ferns and the shoots of young aspens emerged from the soot along Forest Road 25. New wildflowers bloomed in meadows that had been kissed by the fire. Recreation areas reopened. The earth, it seemed, was renewed.

There's a lesson somewhere in the Wallow Fire — in Rodeo-Chediski, too — and maybe the federal agencies and the foresters and the citizens' groups and the environmentalists will find it. The Malboeufs will face possible prison time and fines, and scientists will long study the fire's impact on the White Mountains' ecosystem. In the meantime, Pyne remains certain of one thing: "The question isn't whether or not we'll have fire," he says. "It's what kind, and at what cost."

For more photographs from the Wallow Fire, visit www.arizonahighways.com/extras.asp. AH

THE FIRES OF MY LIFE

AN ESSAY BY CHARLES BOWDEN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK DYKINGA

Rattlesnake, Aspen, Rodeo-Chediski, Horseshoe Two, Wallow ... there have been so many "megafires" in Arizona over the past two decades that the names begin to blur.

THERE ARE NOW TOO MANY FIRES IN MY LIFE. For years, the early fingers of the monsoon in June would punch the mountains with dry storms, and lightning strikes started spot fires on the ranges. Then the rains came, the burns were largely put out. I remember decades ago descending in a chopper to a blackened mountain slope where a hotshot crew polished off such a blaze and it all seemed part of the seasons.

I interviewed a retiring supervisor then who looked up from his federal desk with tired eyes and told me he was glad to leave before it happened ... and what would happen was inevitable: crown fires.

Now, spring means the taste of ash in the air, the dread that the forests of a

After the Wallow Fire, new aspens began springing to life in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.

lifetime will vanish and leave behind baked earth and charred memories. The winter rains and snowpack continue to decline, the land grows bone dry, the early storms become a match in a powder room. The first warm days mean fires rather than flowers.

The ranges vanish inside clouds of smoke and you can't help but wonder if that favored tree where you always paused on the trail, that spot where you made a cup of coffee and stared out into the roll of the earth ... you wonder if that will be there for you after the rage of the burn passes.

I remember one: The trees explode, flames shoot up to heaven. Choppers haul buckets to the blaze as I walk the high country of the Santa Catalina Mountains and taste a forest that has been part of my life and a forest that would not return for decades or centuries depending on the glade and the species. But two things linger in my mind: the harsh smell in the air and the sense that nothing can stop this tidal wave of fire.

This was the Aspen Fire in June 2003. There have been so many since in the Southwest and the names begin to blur. The Aspen Fire took close to 85,000 acres and 340 structures and scalped swatches of the sky-island peaks of ponderosas, Douglas firs, lodgepole pines and spruce.

The mountain was home country for me. I'd written a book about the range and as a teenager I'd been a beast of burden and apprentice scholar to R.H. Whittaker and W.A. Niering as they did the pioneer ecological study of the range, a task that meant walking from the desert floor on one side to the top and then down the other side sampling botany along the way. Niering had survived a hard Pacific war in the islands blasting into caves with a flamethrower. The mountain, embracing saguaro-studded slopes and Douglas fir groves, felt like a far better world.

Then came that June and for a month I watched the slow roasting of those ancient plant communities. A year later came the Nuttall Fire on Mount Graham.

FOR ME, THE FIRE TIME BEGINS with the Rattlesnake blaze in 1994, which laid waste to much of the Chiricahua high country. It changed the mountain because of massive soil loss from the exposed slopes, and over time it drove home the fact that a new era had come to the Southwest. Before around 1880, fire had visited the mountains every 10 years on average. In the Chiricahuas, fire struck about every three years burning out understory, and now and then created a crown fire that would destroy mature stands of forest. Then the place would regenerate. Sometimes the fires were set by Native Americans to induce better habitat for game, create corridors for travel, and as a tactic in warfare. Travelers in the early and mid-19th century left records of seeing constant fires as they lumbered across the deserts.

The arrival of the railroad in the 1880s made the American presence dominant. The new people crushed the old people and fire-setting declined. By the early 20th century fire suppression became a policy of the Forest Service and everything after that was inevitable. Forests that do not burn build up fire loads; eventually a blaze comes and cannot be suppressed. That is what the retiring forest supervisors dreaded.

The Yellowstone Fire of 1988 is perhaps the most widely known case. The fire was left to burn naturally and then, when the public and Congress could not bear the sight any longer, aircraft and 9,000 firefighters descended, and yet the blaze continued for months until wet fall weather quenched the flames. Thirty-six percent of the park was touched by flame.

In the spring of 2011, heavy smoke from the Horseshoe Two Fire blanketed the ground from Deming, New Mexico, to the crest of the Chiricahuas as yet one more swath of the mountain burned. I inhaled the smoke of a vanishing forest, the homeland for centuries of the Chiricahua Apaches. I had walked the peaks for years, a place where once in early September I'd seen the meadows mobbed by rufous hummingbirds on their migration to a tropical winter. I could not even make out the range from 10 miles away. It was hidden from my eyes like the face of God when Moses went to Sinai and entered a cloud. I lack the words to state this kind of loss.

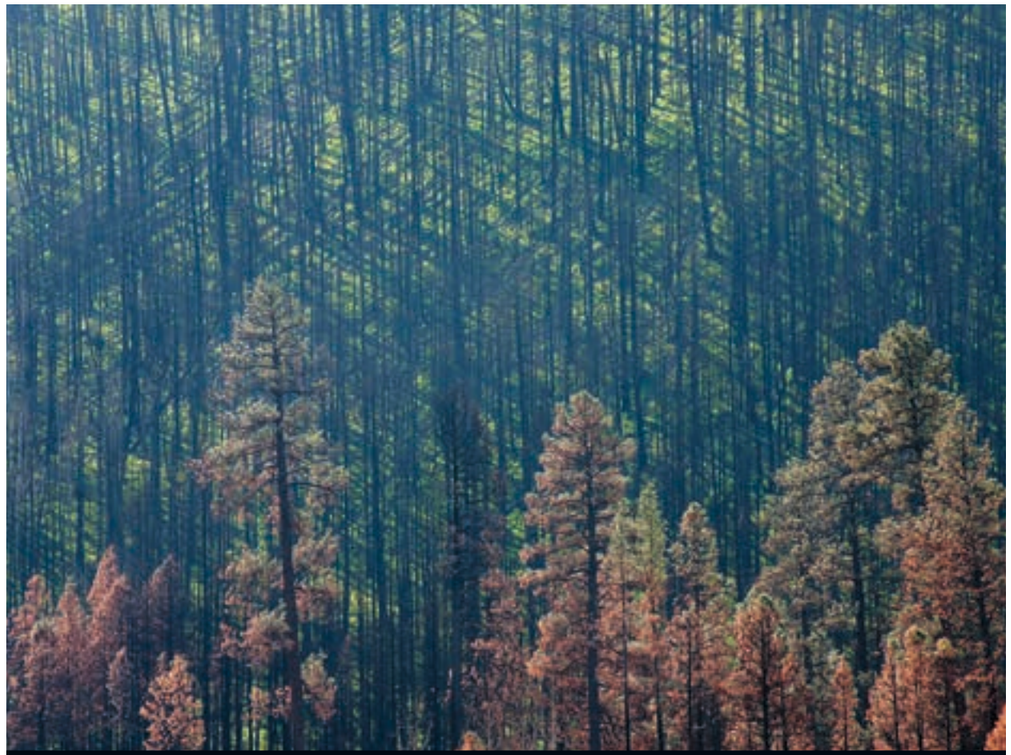
The fuel loads in the forests created by a century of suppression now explode. The rising temperatures and declining moisture merely accelerate the destruction. The sky becomes ash and at night we see the flicker of flames in the places we slept or dreamed or hunted or caught a trout. There is a calendar of fire in various species of trees — ponderosas evolved with fires every 25 years or so, lodgepole pines go up to 300 years between conflagrations. We can argue about what to do, but in the end, we have already done it and must live with this time of flames. We can see the natural function of fire, but still feel vast sorrow when we see our world become char and when towns and favored haunts are threatened. The times that come after the burning will not be easy but must be lived. The ground will not go away and we must not desert our ground.

The forests as we know them are leaving just when we seemed to notice them. Until after World War II and the migration into the region, most Americans hardly thought forests existed in the Southwest. Now, they seem to have discovered this fact just in time to see them burn. As a boy, I remember the shock of visitors when they saw ponderosa stands on the Catalinas above Tucson and realized that they could get out of the car, walk in the snow and on the same day be back in the warmth of the desert floor. In the early '40s, Lowell Thomas — a writer who created the legend of Lawrence of Arabia — and some friends slid around on Mount Lemmon and created the Saguaro Ski Club. Now these moments seem like glimpses of some ancient days before the burning came.

We live in a time when our rivers wane, our lakes shrink and our forests burn. Where Western fires once roared for about eight days, they now go for 37 on average. They burn six times as much ground. Huge stands are pocked with brown trees as pine beetles attack forests weakened by drought.

We have only one possible choice: to embrace the future.

But I cannot escape a sense of lament as I walk a blackened landscape where I once bathed in the fresh scent of pine and sheltered in the shadows of a vaporized forest. There was a time years ago when I lit a camp stove on the flank of a mountain to make coffee. I was surrounded by dry grass, careless, and in an instant flames roared outward from me. I frantically stomped out the fire. But it was a near thing. Almost all forest fires have lightning origins, but what I learned was how tinder-dry the ground we live on becomes before the rains arrive. The landscape we cherish is often on the edge of towering flames.



Megafires blacken entire stands of forest, while only touching other nearby areas, a burn pattern referred to as "mosaic."

THE WALLOW FIRE OF 2011 DEVOURED 538,000 acres in Eastern Arizona's high country, raged for six weeks and cost approximately $109 million to put out. Two Arizonans were eventually charged with causing the fire for carelessly not completely extinguishing a campfire. But increasingly, the causes of the fires are incidental — the huge fuel load and tinder-dry conditions doom the old stands of big wood.

The fuel loads in the forests created by a century of suppression now explode. The rising temperatures and declining moisture merely accelerate the destruction. The sky becomes ash and at night we see the flicker of flames in the places we slept or dreamed or hunted or caught a trout.

THE RODEO-CHEDISKI FIRE OF 2002 ran three weeks and left about 450,000 acres burned and a fistful of towns threatened. I remember walking the burn a year later in spring. The ground was black, and here and there flowers shot out of the scorched earth and green sprouts ringed burned oak stumps. I realized I could hardly give up on a place that tough.

I remember back in an earlier fire season, you couldn't strike a match in the backcountry around Escudilla and I sprawled under the peak and thought of Aldo Leopold, the early forester who helped kill out the wolf, keep down the fires and bring the future to this old ground. He later wrote of a bear there the locals called Bigfoot, a large grizzly that emerged in the spring, killed precisely one cow each year and then returned to the top and summered on marmots and calm. Finally, change came, and "The government trapper who took the grizzly knew he had made Escudilla safe for cows. He did not know he had toppled the spire off an edifice a-building since the morning stars sang together."

And then Leopold, a man of many regrets and even more loves, wrote: "Escudilla still hangs on the horizon, but when you see it you no longer think of bear. It's only a mountain now."

The Wallow Fire roared through here on its way to New Mexico and took new ghosts with it. I am sure if I'd been around in the early 20th century at the meeting, I would have voted in favor of the fatal decision to suppress fires. And I am certain in my days I have done my share to fling greenhouse gases into the sky, fumes that now gag our planet. But I am not paralyzed by these facts or broken by what I see around me. I know the forests of my boyhood will not be back in my lifetime, just as I know there will be more huge fires as the land dries. And Bigfoot, Leopold's grizzly, is dead and there hasn't been a grizzly on this ground since 1936.

We can learn from our mistakes. I have been doing that all of my life.

But the place will be back. It never left.

The fires I will have to dread and yet live with. Arizona has been changed.

That is why the canyon we treasure is so very deep and called grand. AH

Cottonwood to Clarkdale

The potholes can be a little jarring, but don't let that deter you. The wide-angle views of Sedona and the lack of car bumpers and brake lights make this scenic drive well worth a few bumps in the road.

BY KATHY RITCHIE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEREK VON BRIESEN

Everything old is new again. That phrase just about sums up the route from Cottonwood to Clarkdale, which follows three forest roads in the Verde Valley. The drive is all about seeing the very familiar from a very different vantage point.

This drive begins on Bill Gray Road (Forest Road 761), just off State Route 89A outside Cottonwood. After turning northwest on FR 761, you'll pass the All Souls Cemetery. Veer right, and you'll spot a post with "761" etched on it. The rocky road is rough from the get-go and doesn't improve much until you reach the end, some 19 miles later. Take it easy as you get a feel for nature's potholes. The high-desert landscape is carpeted with spindly shrubs, cactuses and succulents such as yuccas. Meanwhile, the red rocks of Sedona will be on your right. There's something magical about seeing Sedona from this vantage point. The wide-angle perspective feels undisturbed, even serene — maybe it's the lack of car bumpers and brake lights.

For the next several miles, the road, which is quiet despite the tire tracks, dips and rises repeatedly. The scenery shifts around mile 4.5, when junipers appear in the landscape. As the road bends slightly west, the view of the red rocks gets interrupted around mile 6 as power lines take center stage.

Just beyond the power lines, keep an eye out for a split in the road. The sign for Forest Road 258, which is your cue to turn left, is slightly obscured. After turning, you'll ascend a very rocky and narrow road. Around mile 7, the route comes to a T-junction. Veer right and continue on FR 258. As the road and surrounding landscape open up, out of nowhere, chalky limestone dominates the scenery. No wonder Verde Valley winemakers love the area — this is the kind of soil that produces crisp Arizona juice. The road eventually plateaus around mile 9.7, where you'll be treated to a stunning view of Jerome perched atop Cleopatra Hill. From there, the former mining colony has an Old-World, fairytale quality about it that's more difficult to see when you approach it from SR 89A.

As the road winds down and around the hill and into the backcountry, you'll catch even more expansive views of the Verde Valley. By mile 11, limestone gives way to clay, and in another 2 miles, you'll reach another T-junction. Turn left onto Forest Road 131. As you descend into the valley, keep an eye out for oncoming traffic — blind driveways lead from nearby homes. By mile 15, the road dips, and lush vegetation canopies the pavement as you near the Verde River around mile 16. The route follows the narrow river as it slices its way past hillsides that bear scars from the area's early mining days. The road eventually turns to pavement at mile 17, and, after a brief climb, you'll spot Tuzigoot National Monument on the left. The drive comes to an abrupt stop when it intersects with Tuzigoot Road. A left turn will take you to the ancient ruins. Turning right will take you into Clarkdale.

BELOW: The route from Cottonwood to Clarkdale features sweeping views of the Verde Valley and Mingus Mountain in the Prescott National Forest.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Tuzigoot National Monument looms near the end of this drive, which ends at Tuzigoot Road.

ADDITIONAL READING:
For more scenic drives, pick up a copy of our book *The Back Roads*. Now in its fifth edition, the book ($19.95) features 40 of the state's most scenic drives. To order a copy, visit www.arizonahighways.com/books.

KEVIN KIBSEY

tour guide

Note: Mileages are approximate.

LENGTH: 19.2 miles one way

DIRECTIONS: From State Route 89A in Cottonwood, turn left onto Bill Gray Road (Forest Road 761) and drive for 6.2 miles to Forest Road 258. Turn left onto FR 258 and continue for 7 miles to Forest Road 131. Turn left onto FR 131 and drive 6 miles to Tuzigoot Road. Turn left to visit Tuzigoot National Monument or right to continue to Clarkdale.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: A four-wheel-drive vehicle is recommended, though this route is passable by sedans in fair weather. Do not attempt this route under inclement conditions.

WARNING: Back-road travel can be hazardous, so be aware of weather and road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone, and let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.

INFORMATION: Tuzigoot National Monument, 928-634-5564 or www.nps.gov/tuzi

511 Travelers in Arizona can visit www.az511.gov or dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more. AH

Red Mountain Trail

This short hike offers panoramic views of the San Francisco Peaks, a great lesson in geology and a rare look inside an ancient volcano.

BY ROBERT STIEVE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINE KEITH

The old double-decker buses in London, the square in Moscow, the Coke can, Bonnie Raitt's hair, the little girl who was stalked by the Big Bad Wolf ... a lot of icons in this world are red, but in Arizona, red is an adjective that usually describes scenic rock formations, especially in the Grand Canyon, Sedona and Monument Valley. Not as famous, but impressive nonetheless, is Red Mountain, which sits about 25 miles northwest of Flagstaff.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, Red Mountain is one of several hundred cinder cones within a large volcanic field that stretches from Williams to the canyon of the Little Colorado River. The centerpiece of this hike is Red Mountain, which erupted about 740,000 years ago. By comparison, Sunset Crater, the well-known volcano just north of Flagstaff, erupted around A.D. 1050. This one is much older, but that's not what makes it unique. What's unusual about Red Mountain, which rises 1,000 feet above the surrounding landscape, is that its internal structure is exposed — like a massive geode that's been cracked in half. This one-of-a-kind trail takes you into that core, an area known as the amphitheater.

The trailhead is located just off U.S. Route 180, the highway most people take when heading to the Grand Canyon from Flagstaff. Few passersby, however, ever stop. And that's too bad, because this short hike offers not only scenery, but also a great lesson in geology. Plus, the trail is rated easy, so just about anybody in the car can do it.

It begins with a gradual uphill climb through a field of scattered junipers and piñon pines. For the most part, you'll be surrounded by open country, which allows for some wonderful panoramic views of the San Francisco Peaks to the northeast, as well as Red Mountain right in front of you. By the way, in addition to being easy, it's impossible to get lost on this trail. Even Mr. Magoo could find his way.

The last half-mile of the hike follows a normally dry streambed. If you look down at the sand, you'll see thousands, even millions, of black shiny granules, some of which are as big as golf balls. These granules are often mistaken for "Apache tears," which are composed of obsidian, the volcanic glass that was highly valued by ancient cultures for crafting arrowheads, knives, scrapers and other tools. But don't be fooled. What you're actually seeing are the crystals of minerals (pyroxene and amphibole) eroded from the volcano. Once you get into the amphitheater, take a closer look at the walls and you'll see more of these minerals embedded in the cinders. Eventually, they'll be plucked out by water and wind erosion.

Meantime, they're among the many things to explore inside the amphitheater, along with the erosional pillars known as "hoodoos" — they're similar to what you see in Bryce Canyon National Park. As you look around, remind yourself that you're actually standing inside an ancient volcano. It's a rare opportunity. An experience at least as impressive as standing in Red Square or next to Bonnie Raitt.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The sun sets over Red Mountain during a summer monsoon. The cinder cone, which formed approximately 740,000 years ago, rises 1,000 feet above the surrounding terrain. **RIGHT:** The short hike into Red Mountain's natural amphitheater reveals impressive views of the cinder cone's hoodoos.

ADDITIONAL READING:
For more hikes, pick up a copy of *Arizona Highways Hiking Guide*, which features 52 of the state's best trails — one for each weekend of the year, sorted by seasons. To order a copy, visit www.arizonahighways.com/books.

KEVIN KIBSEY

trail guide

LENGTH: 2.5 miles round-trip

DIFFICULTY: Easy

ELEVATION: 6,745 to 7,200 feet

DIRECTIONS: From Flagstaff, drive northwest on U.S. Route 180 for approximately 25 miles to a dirt road at Milepost 247 (look for the Forest Service sign that marks the Red Mountain Trail). Turn left onto the dirt road and drive about a quarter-mile to the trailhead.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None

DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)

HORSES ALLOWED: No

USGS MAPS: Flagstaff, Ebert Mountain

INFORMATION: Flagstaff Ranger District, 928-526-0866 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

LEAVE-NO-TRACE PRINCIPLES:

- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly and pack out all of your trash.
- Leave what you find.
- Respect wildlife and minimize impact.
- Be considerate of others.

where is this?

Ready for Takeoff

While you're traveling along one of America's major north-south highways, you might catch a glimpse of this old guided missile, which is topped by three characters from *Peanuts*, Charles M. Schulz's popular comic strip. Little information is available about how Snoopy and his pals came to adorn the rocket, but it could have something to do with a nearby rock formation that bears a striking resemblance to Charlie Brown's famous companion.

— MOLLY J. SMITH

MARK LIPCZYNSKI

April 2012 Answer & Winner

Kingman Railroad Depot. Congratulations to our winner, Isabella Moreno of Tucson, Arizona.

RICHARD MAACK

Win a collection of our most popular books! To enter, correctly identify the location featured at left and email your answer to editor@arizonahighways.com — type "Where Is This?" in the subject line. Entries can also be sent to 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009 (write "Where Is This?" on the envelope). Please include your name, address and phone number. One winner will be chosen in a random drawing of qualified entries. Entries must be postmarked by June 15, 2012. Only the winner will be notified. The correct answer will be posted in our August issue and online at www.arizonahighways.com beginning July 15.